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KING, QUEEN, JACK

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QUEEN ELIZABETH AT HER ACCESSI-

KING QUEEN JACK

PHILIP OF SPAIN
COURTS ELIZABETH

BY

MILTON WALDMAN

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.
LONDON NEW YORK TORONTO

1931

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO. LTD.

**39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON, E.C.4
6 OLD COURT HOUSE STREET, CALCUTTA
53 NICOL ROAD, BOMBAY
36A MOUNT ROAD, MADRAS**

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.

**55 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK
221 EAST 20TH STREET, CHICAGO
88 TREMONT STREET, BOSTON
128-132 UNIVERSITY AVENUE, TORONTO**

FOREWORD

THIS narrative might almost be described as a door that grew into a house.

Some years ago I began the preparation of a Biography of Queen Elizabeth. About a year ago I began to write it and submitted the first chapter, a very long one, to a friend. His comments, though unkind, were helpful. The story of Philip II's proposal to Queen Elizabeth at the beginning of her reign was, he pointed out, a little comedy complete in itself. His unfailing dramatic sense had caught the significance of the fact that one of the most momentous episodes in English history had begun and ended in the incredibly short time of four months. To boil it down to a mere introductory chapter to another story was to waste its value. After thinking it over I agreed and laid aside the parent volume for subsequent completion. With more than the usual sense of indebtedness, and the hope that he will think the result worth the trouble he

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has taken, I dedicate the fruit of his own suggestion to Mr. John L. Balderston.

In conformity with a happily growing practice and my own inclination, I have left out the usual apparatus of historical study. Every necessary reference to authority will, I think, be found in the text, and the sources used in the Bibliography at the end of the volume.

M. W.

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CHAPTER I

PHILIP ADOPTS ELIZABETH

TOWARDS the end of October 1558, in the old Palace of the Netherlands at Brussels, sat a solitary little man wrestling with a large decision. On the desk before him lay neat piles of letters and reports which he turned over with absorbed attention. Though his expression was troubled his movements were precise and unhurried. Everything about him, appearance, manner, apparel, the arrangement of his work-table, were outward expressions of an inward tidiness and sobriety. His small figure was frail but well proportioned, and carried with dignity. He was dressed in plain black velvet, without the jewels and laces which were the current fashion, but with a fastidious cleanliness which was not. His yellow hair and beard were cut short and straight. Even temper and a gentle melancholy looked out from his mild blue eyes.

His tastes were reflected in the character of the room. It was silent and heavy-shadowed. The light penetrated its leaded panes with

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difficulty, and the dark figured velvet on its walls muffled the sounds of men and horses moving over the cobbles of the busy Grande Place outside. The furniture and hangings were sombre in colour and severe in line; the four or five paintings, objects of devotion rather than of decoration, represented sacred subjects in subdued pigments. A large gold crucifix hung above the fireplace, and a smaller one of ivory stood on the large writing-desk, which was drawn as close to the heat of the fire as possible.

Though barely thirty-one years of age the little man appeared weighed down by many and grave responsibilities, which was not surprising, since the position he occupied was the most exacting on earth. He was King of Castille and Aragon, King Consort of England, Duke of Brabant and of Milan, Count of Flanders and of the Holy Roman Empire. Under these titles he governed Spain, the Netherlands and other portions of Europe, as well as nearly all that was known of the New World beyond the seas. He was the Eldest Son of the Church, her principal secular arm and chief defender. In short he was the greatest ruler, the most important

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man in the world, and people lowered their voices in awe when they mentioned his name.

The task of maintaining and if possible extending this vast inheritance entailed enormous and unending labours, none of which he ever thought of shirking. His duties offered him, after his religion, the deepest satisfactions of life. He profoundly enjoyed the complicated details of administration—conferences with ministers, the study of the reports sent in by his widespread diplomats and secret agents, the dictation and marginal annotation of letters, the invention of codes and of filing systems. The only thing he dreaded was making up his mind. It was his experience that any decision, with whatever difficulty arrived at, invariably produced the necessity for another and so on endlessly. In his innermost heart he felt that God would in the end evolve a satisfactory solution to the problems that beset a devout and industrious Christian prince.

Unfortunately there were crises at which the Divine Providence could not be trusted to work swiftly enough, and one was now at hand. The Queen of England was mortally ill and might die at any moment. The neat

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pile of papers on the desk, confidential despatches from the Spanish agents in London, mentioned all manner of disquieting possibilities. The succession to the English throne was unsettled. It might be occupied after the Queen's death by a heretic or an enemy, in which case Spain's influence in the island would be at an end, and all the plans so long and carefully laid by himself and his imperial father, Charles V, demolished at one stroke. If this disaster were to be prevented, urged the writers, the King must take immediate steps to select and support the successor of his choice. Better yet he should, if possible, come in person, both for the sake of his own interests and because the dying woman was longing to see him once more.

Philip weighed the pros and cons of the second recommendation, both in its practical and sentimental aspects, and decided against it. The business which detained him in Brussels was too important to allow him to go to England. The Flemings were restive, and he was at war with the French on the neighbouring border. If he left Flanders to go anywhere it would be to Spain, from which he had been absent for the greater part of ten years.

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He could not pretend that he was deeply grieved at the thought of losing his wife. Even the ambassador (appropriately named Renard), whom his father had selected to negotiate the marriage, had candidly admitted that Mary Tudor was more distinguished for her "infinite virtues than for the more agreeable qualities" which go to make a successful marriage. Philip, after the briefest experience, had realised the justice of the verdict. Mary was eleven years older than he, her face was plain and her temperament uncomfortably rigid. She had failed in the all-important duty of providing an heir, though twice arousing false hopes which had ended by exposing him to the bawdy humour of the mob ; his wife's subjects, always quick to blame all misfortunes, whether of earthly or celestial origin, on him, apparently overlooked the existence of Don Carlos, his son by a previous marriage, or else considered that the young man's feeble health and feebler wits supported their obscene and baseless innuendoes. Her inability to force Parliament to grant him the Crown Matrimonial had added to the humiliating ambiguity of his position in England. Worst of all, she had fallen desperately in love with him, a

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most unseemly violation of the conventions governing alliances such as theirs. This was the last thing he had married her for ; at the earliest opportunity he had fled from her tenacious affection on the plea of urgent business elsewhere.

Nevertheless the reasons for the marriage had been excellent. Ten years earlier King Henry II of France had brought the infant Queen of Scotland, Mary Stuart, to Paris, intending to marry her as soon as her age allowed to his heir, the Dauphin Francis. Henry made no secret of the fact that he meant to assert his future daughter-in-law's claim to the English throne and enforce it by arms if necessary. With the united strength of France, England, and Scotland at his disposal, he would be able to close the Channel, isolate Spain from her Dutch colonies and successfully dispute with her the hegemony of Europe.

To this dangerous scheme the matrimonial alliance with England had been Charles V's retort. Philip and Mary's son would rule England in the interests of Spain, and Henry's chain, thus deprived of its central link, could never be forged.

But Fate had dealt more kindly with Henry's



PHILIP AND MARY

PHILIP ADOPTS ELIZABETH

calculations than with the Emperor's. It was certain now that Philip and Mary would never have a son ; after her death the succession would lie open to Spain's enemies. And Spain herself was weaker than she had been four years before. Charles's death had lost her the Holy Roman Empire, and rebellion was likely to deprive her of the Low Countries unless every available man, every spare penny, was spent in retaining them. Meantime the Dauphin and Mary Stuart had been united the previous spring in Notre-Dame. The bride's French mother ruled in Scotland as Regent for her daughter, and French troops were converting the border fortresses into convenient bases of operations against England. Spain and France having come to blows on the Continent, Philip had naturally turned to the English for assistance, with the result that the French had taken Calais and by this conquest anchored themselves perilously near to his Flemish frontier. The loss of Calais and the cost of the war had so infuriated his allies that relations between him and them were now badly strained.

Philip turned over the various recommendations in the despatches which lay before him.

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The more aggressive of his correspondents advised him to come over in person, seize the throne by right of his marriage and hold it against all comers. But this course was too decisive, too full of uncertainties. It was very doubtful if the English would have him ; one of their peculiarities as a race was a strong dislike of foreigners. He was not unaware that most of them had welcomed his departure from their shores with greater enthusiasm than his arrival. Even if by any chance he was able to enforce his claim, he would still be saddled with the lifelong job of holding it against the French. All this meant a large part of his future life spent in England, a country he would be quite content never to set eyes on again.

Putting himself aside there remained as possible successors three young women—Mary Stuart, Katherine Grey and Elizabeth Tudor. None of them was altogether satisfactory. Mary Stuart, who derived her claim from her grandmother Margaret, Henry VIII's elder sister, was barred from the succession by Henry's will. It was true that Rome regarded her as the rightful heir and Henry's testament setting her aside in favour of his illegitimate

PHILIP ADOPTS ELIZABETH

daughter as an impudent and irreverent document. But Philip, though in all other ways a good Catholic, was unable to subscribe to this view. It would never do to have a French princess Queen of England ; if that happened Henry instead of himself would dominate Europe, the Netherlands would probably be lost, and the last advantage of his marriage thrown away. Philip, unhappy to find himself in disagreement with his Church, justified himself by challenging the French King's right to the name of true Catholic.

Katherine Grey, the next alternative, was the granddaughter of Henry VIII's younger sister, Mary. She was a professed heretic and her pretensions were supported by heretics. If the crown fell to her there would be a return to the Reformation in England and the overthrow of the faith which the dying Queen and her Consort had worked so hard to restore. It suited Philip no more to have England Protestant than to have her French ; in either event she would be lost to Spain. He had an appalling vision of heretic preachers flocking across the North Sea to Holland as they had done in the sinful days of Henry VIII (indeed these black-frocked disturbers of the peace

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had, together with wool, constituted England's principal export to the Lowlands), and of a Protestant league which would embrace the French Huguenots, various German princes and many others who would be delighted to join in the general disorder. In fact, if England again deserted the old religion all sorts of disagreeable things might be expected to happen, any one of which would drag Spain into another protracted war which she did not want and could not afford.

There remained then only Elizabeth, Henry VIII's last surviving child. The Church had declared her born out of wedlock ; she was therefore, in the eyes of good Catholics, ineligible to succeed. To put her on the throne and keep her there might lead to a quarrel with the Pope, and would almost certainly entail a war with France at a time when he was particularly eager to settle his affairs in Northern Europe and go back to Spain. Moreover she too was tainted with heresy. His agents could not say definitely what her theological views were, but it was well known that they were not above suspicion.

On the other hand Henry had acknowledged her and placed her after Mary in the suc-

PHILIP ADOPTS ELIZABETH

cession. The discerning Renard not long ago had warned Philip that he could not "set aside the dispositions of King Henry in favour of Elizabeth without danger of rebellion." The present mood of the English was dangerous : if it was Elizabeth they wanted, it might be better to let them have her and take his chances with the Pope, France and the awkward question of illegitimacy. Furthermore, to dispute the sovereign's ancient prerogative of naming his own heir would create an embarrassing precedent for all rulers in the future.

Elizabeth's youth was also in her favour. She was only twenty-five and should not be unduly difficult to manage. She had, so far as he knew, no party and few powerful friends. Philip reflected that if he put her on the throne she would not only be grateful to him for his help but would necessarily depend on him to keep her there. She was already deeply in his debt : three years earlier he had prevented Parliament from publicly disinheriting her by setting aside her father's will, and had not improbably saved her from even greater peril as well, at a time when many of his and Mary's closest advisers had urged her execution on the ground of the public safety. By

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reaching out a hand he could pick up a letter of condolence from her on the recent death of his father, dated October 19th, 1558, in which she fervently protested that "the life I enjoy is equally the fruit of the Queen my sister's goodness and of your Majesty's magnanimous protection." The reference to her sister was, of course, a mere concession to policy; there was always a chance that Mary might recover.

The last document has been read, its margin annotated for answer or inquiry in the King's neat hand, its contents weighed and entered in the ledger of policy. Every factor has been considered, and the conclusion to which they all point is unmistakable. No choice is left to Spain but Elizabeth. . . .

Yet the King hesitates a while longer. In a silence unbroken save by the rustle of a paper or the crackle of a log memory intrudes her little scenes on the closely written pages before him. A young girl, tall and graceful, comes forward to meet him in the great throne room at Hampton Court . . . she makes a charming, shy little speech of thanks and admiration . . . a little later he looks on unseen from behind a curtain at the same young girl, now white-

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faced and frightened, breasting with soft words the torrent of her royal sister's wrath. . . .

Imagination conjures up other, less agreeable, little pictures, and words that are but the echoes of whispers. The lifted brows and meaning smiles of the English courtiers . . . de Noailles, the French ambassador, muttering cynical conjectures behind his hand to King Henry II in the crowded presence chamber of the Louvre . . . Giovanni Michiel, locked in his cabinet, scribbling dark hints he dared not expand for the imagination of Venice's Doge to gloat upon . . . all the lewd exchanges between the impious if he again extended a hand to help this mysteriously attractive sister-in-law.

With an effort the little monarch brushed away his memories and stopped his ears to the echoes of scandal. He had always tried, regardless of the cost to himself, to serve the glory of God, the greatness of Spain and the peace of Europe. His duty was clear and he acted on it. The guilty secret was again locked away in his own breast. Not until many years later did he make the confession reported by Thomas Cecil, the eldest son of Elizabeth's chief minister: "Whatever he suffered from

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Queen Elizabeth was the just judgment of God because, being married to Queen Mary, whom he thought to be a virtuous and good lady, yet in the fancy of love he could not affect her : but as for the lady Elizabeth, he was enamoured by her, being a fair and beautiful woman.”

The King summoned a secretary and dictated a letter to his chaplain and confessor, entrusting him with the delicate task of obtaining Mary’s consent to Elizabeth’s accession. The chaplain, who was “ very dear to the Queen,” had already been sent over to London, because Philip knew that his wife listened more readily to the admonitions of priests than the counsels of politicians.

The next task was to find the right man to direct the new Queen once she was seated on the throne. The King finally selected his friend and counsellor, Don Gomez Suarez de Figueroa, the Count of Feria. This Cordoban not only enjoyed his master’s complete confidence, a qualification indispensable for the vital mission before him, but he was experienced in dealing with the English. He had accompanied Philip on his wedding journey in 1555 and had been sent over in the spring of 1558

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to argue Spain's allies into providing money and troops for the war with France. He was also in love with an English lady, whom he was already engaged to marry, and would undoubtedly welcome the opportunity of being with her again. He was obviously the best available man. The King sent for him, told him that he was to go to England to second the chaplain's efforts if that emissary proved unsuccessful, and to remain there as ambassador plenipotentiary.

CHAPTER II

AND SELECTS HER PRECEPTOR

THE new ambassador-designate abhorred procrastination above all other human vices save heresy. Barely had he been dismissed from the King's presence than he returned home, ordered his household to pack at once for a long absence and be prepared to leave at an instant's notice. Within three days he was ready to sail and only waiting for the King's memorandum of instructions to be delivered. He then discovered that Philip's wishes were still adrift in a sea of uncertainty.

Feria was annoyed, though, knowing his man well, not altogether surprised. In as abrupt a tone as a Spaniard ever permitted himself in talking to his sovereign he made it clear that he could not be expected to set off on one of the most important missions ever allotted to a diplomat, with the whole future of Spain hanging on his efforts, unless he had specific knowledge of what he was expected to do.

But the very magnitude of the crisis reduced the King to obstinate indecision. He did not

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know, he could not say, what he wanted done. All that Feria could extract for his own guidance was that he should look over the ground and report frequently and fully. When the need for action arose he was to write to Brussels for orders if time allowed ; if the emergency was too great he was to use his own judgment. The King foresaw and implored him to avoid various kinds of disaster ; but what means were to be used in avoiding them, and how far these means might be employed, he preferred to leave to Providence and his ambassador's imagination.

And this was all that Feria was able to learn. The arrival of fresh advice from England, to the effect that the Queen had rallied temporarily, gave him three or four more days of grace in which to press for further enlightenment, but the ensuing discussions taught him little more than he could have guessed for himself in the beginning.

Three topics were uppermost in these last-minute conferences—religion, the French war and Elizabeth's marriage. It was, Philip explained, essential that Mary's good work for the Catholic faith should not be undone. He was afraid, however, that the hatred aroused

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by her burnings would lead to a reaction in which the Church and its flock would suffer irreparable hurt. Zeal in the extermination of heretics was of course a virtue, but the King felt and Feria agreed that in Mary it had become a positive vice. Nevertheless the English blamed these persecutions on Philip even more than on his wife. It would be Feria's business to allay their resentment, compose the enmity between the hostile sects, and prevail on Elizabeth to leave the existing religious establishment undisturbed.

As to the French war, the ambassador must do all in his power to keep England belligerent. The situation was not only delicate but irritating. A peace conference was going on at the moment at Cercamps, a Flemish village near the French border, and would have ended some time since in a peaceable settlement had not England stubbornly refused to sign any treaty until Calais was given back to her. In vain had Philip tried to soften the English Commissioners with threats and promises, pointing out that Calais was not worth a thousandth part of the trouble to which it was putting him, and that the English had lost it through their own incompetence. He had even offered to recap-

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ture it for them if they would put their backs into the war and supply him with men and money for the expedition. Their invariable answer was to drag up an old promise that he would not agree to peace until they had their “lost jewel of Calais” back. Deeply as he regretted that promise he dared not break it. If he did it was highly probable that the English would turn against him on his wife’s death, make a separate peace with France, and upset Europe so completely that he would barely be safe behind the wall of the Pyrenees. Yet he must have peace, even at the price of a fortified French town on his Flemish border. His treasury was exhausted, he repeated again and again to Feria, and he could not neglect his business in Spain much longer. He would have to obtain somehow, anyhow, a further suspension of hostilities. He could only hope that Feria would be able, while the new truce lasted, to bully or cajole the English into a better frame of mind.

Of Elizabeth’s marriage, which was the most important question, since the answer to the others might largely depend upon it, the King said least. She was to be prevented from marrying a Protestant and encouraged to con-

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sider some protégé of Philip, such as young Philibert of Savoy or one of the King's cousins, Ferdinand or Charles, sons of the Holy Roman Emperor. It was obvious to Feria that the King was enthusiastic about none of these possible husbands, and even more obvious that he could not be induced as yet to talk about himself in that capacity.

The ambassador was not in the least misled by his master's reticence. He was an experienced reader of men and had spent ten years in an intensive study of Philip. He had seen him in contact with both Mary and Elizabeth, and had heard the gossip of the courtiers and diplomats assembled in London and Brussels. Where de Noailles, the French ambassador, could only hint at the significance of Philip's "special commands to the principal Lords" in London in 1555 commending the Princess Elizabeth to her sister's care, Feria could be certain of the King's meaning, since he was one of the lords referred to. When Giovanni Michiel explained to the Doge in 1557 that Philip would "not only . . . not permit, but opposed and prevented the Queen's wish to have her (Elizabeth) . . . declared a bastard by Act of Parliament . . . and consequently in-

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eligible to the throne, which, besides affection, argued some particular design on the part of the King with regard to her," Feria could have further enlightened the Doge had he so chosen, for he had begged the King not to interfere on Elizabeth's behalf since, as the hope of the Protestant party, she would be a danger to him as long as she lived. The strength with which Philip had withstood the terrific pressure brought on him by Feria and others to sacrifice the girl did indeed argue the "affection and particular design" at which the Venetian had only guessed.

But the ambassador kept his views to himself for the present. Even he would not have dared to raise this question uninvited, and particularly while his Majesty still had a wife living.

If Feria's preparations for his English adventure were thorough, his enthusiasm was distinctly lukewarm. In addition to the inadequacy of his instructions he disagreed fundamentally with the King's whole English policy. He was altogether opposed, in the first place, to the selection of Elizabeth. He barely knew her, but what he had heard was not in her favour. Her teachers had been heretics, her friends and associates rebels, she had given no

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indication either of a capacity for government or serious appreciation of royal responsibilities. Had Feria had his way Philip would have made peace with France and supported Mary Stuart on the throne as the nominee of the joint Catholic Powers.

The ambassador's two previous visits to England had convinced him that the country was not fit to be treated with kindness ; he was one of the leaders of that party in the Spanish Cabinet which favoured its immediate invasion. He had seen Philip insulted in public at the time of his marriage to Mary, and he himself had often turned a disdainful eye on the rabble the previous summer when it cursed him openly as the agent of Spain's extortions. He considered the English unstable, too ready to accept change for the mere sake of novelty, lacking in proper respect for their lawful rulers and decent gratitude to Spain for past favours. They "had matter but wanted form," a most serious blemish in the eyes of this Renaissance nobleman. He expressed his sentiments incisively when he later wrote to Philip : "In Scotland I believe they are ill-treating the English. I am sure they are not doing it as much as I could wish."

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Yet the Spaniard had lost his heart to one of the detested island race. He had come to England on his previous visit engaged to a young cousin of great wealth, and already provided with the papal dispensation necessary for marriage to so close a relative. But the sight of Jane Dormer, one of Mary's maids of honour, had promptly driven the cousin in Spain out of his thoughts. Feria was quite carried away, as much by the girl's militant piety as by her celebrated beauty. She was as rugged a Catholic as Mary herself, and between the two women, otherwise so different, there existed a deep attachment of loyalty and affection. The ambassador set out to court the fair maid of honour with all the ardour for which his race is famous. Though overwhelmed with the problems involved in loosening Parliament's fierce hold on the national purse-strings, he had yet contrived to sweep out of his way scores of rival suitors, amongst them more than one prince of the blood. The young lady, though only sixteen, found the Spaniard's mature distinction and relentless way with heretics greatly to her taste, and her personal inclination was reinforced by the Queen's advice. Feria left England as he had

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arrived, engaged to be married, but to another woman. Through friends in Rome he thriftily transferred the dispensation for the marriage with the heiress to his brother. The prospect of bearing his bride away to Spain at the end of his labours in England was Feria's one compensation for an otherwise thankless assignment.

Before the Count could penetrate deeper into his master's nebulous wishes a peremptory despatch arrived from London. Mary had taken a turn for the worse, the doctors could hold out no further hope, she might die at any moment. Speed was now of greater importance than exact instructions. Feria gathered his household and hurried to Antwerp, where a vessel waited to take him to England. There had been no time to prepare one of the state galleys. Nothing was available but a tiny coastal trader loaded with textiles from the looms of Ghent and Ypres and exotic wares transhipped by way of Spain from the Americas. Instead of the smart sailors of the royal marine, it carried a mixed crew of waterside ragamuffins who gloomily looked forward to having their throats cut and their cargoes stolen by the English when they reached

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Gravesend. Early in the week of November 4th the King of Spain's envoy left the mouth of the Scheldt and headed into the cold mists of the North Sea.

* * *

Meantime the chaplain was finding Mary extraordinarily stubborn for a woman on her deathbed. The accumulated fear, shame and humiliation of years burst out in a fury against her half-sister. Mary had forgotten nothing of the misery—her neglected childhood, her mother's wretched death—for which the sinful passion wakened in her father by that strumpet Anne Boleyn was responsible. She remembered the rebellion which those traitors, Wyatt and Courtenay, had raised in Elizabeth's interest and (on the plainest evidence) with her knowledge; the state processions when the mob had insulted the Queen by their mad cheers for the comely inscrutable girl at her side; the anonymous broadsides lampooning her and clamouring for the day when Elizabeth should sit in her place. The very fact of Elizabeth's existence had made a tragic mockery of the hopes with which Mary had begun her reign. Her life would have been forfeited long ago had Philip not interceded to save it. Having

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given in to her husband then, and paid for it with many hours of bitter regret, the unhappy woman vowed that she would not obey him in what he asked of her now. The girl was a bastard, her faith was as doubtful as her virtue : she was no fit heir to a throne.

There was something else, too, something very real, which Mary could not breathe even to the confessor. It began with that time, only four years ago, when she waited for Philip, the affianced husband whom she had never seen, to come to her. He was young and handsome, she plain and middle-aged. Would he, she had wondered wretchedly, find her too old, too ugly, too ignorant in the ways of love? There was no one to advise her save Renard, who coolly repeated her tormented confidences to his superior, the Cardinal Granvella : "She swore that she had never experienced the emotion called love, nor had her thoughts ever strayed to sensual desire." The ambassador had told her, in answer to her questions, that Philip was gentle and patient, and, though handsome as a god, of a disposition far more pious than carnal. Yet she was not reassured : her anxious imagination, kindled by gossip and her tortured self-

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doubt, persisted in picturing him as a lusty young blade, the tempestuous lover of a thousand women.

When finally he arrived she found that he was all that she had hoped, and more, an incomparable paragon amongst men. At sight she had loved him. The love grew, and with it a pain unknown to her experience. For the desires she had feared in him she had discovered in herself, and no effort of hers had been capable of awakening his response. During the long days and nights of his absences she had brooded on her passion and the meaning of the court's muffled laughter. The watchful de Noailles wrote to Henry II: "They tell me that at times, during the hours of the night, she is so obsessed by her love and desire that she is transported quite beyond herself, and believes that the cardinal reason of her unhappiness is the grief she feels each day at seeing her body so ravaged and her years fleeting at so swift a pace." She had borne with fortitude the fearful pains which racked her body, thinking them the portent of the child who would bind Philip to her for ever. Her prayer book, preserved in the Bodleian Library, is worn with use and stained with tears at the

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pages given to prayers for the absent and (for all women labouring of child.)

The chaplain was told none of these things and no word of reproach did Mary ever utter against her husband. Nor did she confess the old and aching jealousy of his solicitude for the young Elizabeth. But she had no need to : the chaplain observed her wild anger, remembered Philip's troubled preoccupation with Elizabeth's marriage, and drew his own conclusions.

He waited patiently until her tears and anger were spent, then pointed out, gently and persuasively, her duty as a loyal daughter and wife. His office authorised him to expound the displeasure of Heaven at an act so unfilial as disrespect for a father's will ; his instructions from Philip enabled him to unfold the disastrous consequences on earth if she disobeyed her husband's wishes. However sinful the conditions under which Elizabeth was conceived, the late King had undoubtedly intended her to succeed in the regrettable event of Mary's failure to provide an heir of her own body. Much if not most that she condemned in Elizabeth might be granted, yet the fact remained that any other successor would add immeasurably to her people's distress and

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Philip's perplexities. Mary Stuart on the throne of England meant that Philip's wife would have allowed the country he had so loyally protected to fall into the hands of his most dangerous enemies. It was to avoid just this possibility that her father had for ever cut off the line of the Stuarts from the succession. It was for the same reason (together with her many virtues, of course) that Charles V of sainted memory had so graciously welcomed her marriage with his eldest son.

For a long time the struggle went on. Mary alternated between fits of stormy argument and helpless weeping ; the confessor "assiduously and adroitly persevered in his design." Once she gave in, but two days later changed her mind. It looked as if the chaplain would have to fall back on the support of Feria, who was at the moment suffering with whatever patience or fortitude he could muster the delays due to fog and tumultuous seas. But the priest, though he knew of the approaching assistance, dared not wait for it. Hourly the Queen grew feebler, her relapses into unconsciousness more frequent. With redoubled energy he hurried to renew his exhortations before death should rob him of his victory.

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In the end he won, but with very little to spare. All her life Mary's sense of duty had been stronger than jealousy, resentment or even hatred, stronger than any other emotion she had ever experienced save her fear of God and her love of her husband. She agreed to name Elizabeth her heir on three conditions: that her councillors be retained, her debts paid and the Catholic religion maintained. With a weary uncertainty as to whether or not any of these conditions would ever be fulfilled, she proceeded to give legal force to the promise she had made.

The chaplain then disappeared into obscurity. It is not even recorded whether the gown of his Order was black, white or brown. Philip II had used him to change the course of history, whereupon history swallowed him up and he is heard of no more.

* * *

Three days later, on November 9th, Feria rolled up from the port in the ambassadorial chaise, to find the court and the country completely fuddled with nervous excitement.

The air was full of questions that no one could answer. Would Elizabeth be strong enough to grasp her legacy? Would the old

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story of blood and destruction be repeated before Mary's successor was firmly established on the throne? Would England's life be crushed out by her powerful neighbours, Spain and France, during the hours of turmoil and weakness that were coming? Did Philip's new ambassador come as a friend or an enemy?

Feria was at once besieged by the fearful and the curious, but he shook them off until he could make inquiry about the Queen. He was informed that she was delirious and could not be interviewed. This was now of no great consequence, however, since she had already given in to the confessor. He next sent for the Queen's doctors to make quite certain that her illness was mortal. Not before they had satisfied him on this point did he send a message to Elizabeth to ask if he might see her.

Her answer came in the form of an invitation to supper at Hatfield, which he eagerly accepted. When he arrived he found the Princess surrounded by her friends, most of whom were strangers to him and the rest acquaintances of whom he did not approve. The conversation was perfunctory. He conveyed to her the assurance of Spain's support and received in return a pleasantly phrased

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but formal expression of gratitude. But she declined to commit herself so early to any course of conduct, or acknowledge herself obligated to Spain because of Philip's intervention on her behalf. This attitude was slightly disappointing, but Feria could not greatly blame her for caution in the circumstances ; she was not yet Queen and it would have been impolitic to have said too much in front of the men who surrounded her at the time.

The ambassador returned to London and proceeded to call the Privy Council together, in the name of the absent King Consort and by his instructions, to ratify their dying ruler's choice. The councillors needed no persuasion ; they saw as well as he which way the wind was blowing. Henceforth the new Queen and not the old King would distribute offices of honour and profit, and they were tumbling over one another in their offers of loyalty and assistance to her. Philip's money was in their pockets, but Philip was again a foreigner, and his representative merely an impertinent intruder trying to teach them their business. "They received me," wrote Feria, who never believed in suppressing disagreeable truths even from a

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king, “as a man who came accredited with the Bulls of a dead Pope.”

There was only another week to wait. While Feria closeted himself with prominent Catholics in his palace by the river and painted gloomy pictures of the state of England for Philip’s benefit, while the politicians and the public waited in hopeful or fearful expectancy and William Cecil rode daily between London and Hatfield with fresh proclamations and revised lists of future office-holders, the Queen tossed in delirium on her bed in St. James’s Palace, praying confusedly for her soul, the constancy of her country to the Catholic faith, and one last reunion with her husband.

CHAPTER III

"A LASS WITHOUT PRUDENCE"

MARY died on November 17th shortly before dawn. In his next letter to Philip Feria gave the new Queen's advisers full marks for the speed and skill with which they had accomplished the change of government. It was no more than they deserved, for within six hours of her sister's death Elizabeth was in a stronger position than either of her predecessors had been after eighteen months of struggle and bloodshed. By eight o'clock the news had reached the little group at Hatfield twenty-five miles away. By half-past eight Parliament, in joint assembly, had confirmed Elizabeth's succession according to the solemn formalities required of it by law and had been dismissed. By half-past ten Cecil was in London with his proclamation, the fruit of many secret collaborations with Elizabeth at Hatfield; before noon it was read aloud to the throng outside Westminster and to another equally large at Cheapside in the City.

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The capital exploded into a riot of joy. The people jostled their way through the narrow streets and shook the sturdy little houses with their cheers and the blasts from their trumpets. As the early twilight came on they kindled bonfires in every open space, and by nightfall most of them were happily drunk. In the official world there was a great deal of running about for something to do, and general bewilderment as to what it should be. Foreigners hurried to their embassies and discussed anxiously with one another what was likely to happen to them and their property under the new order. The harassed legation secretaries frantically scribbled their despatches and rushed off the couriers before the ports could be closed. Feria, catching glimpses of the scene from the window of his house or of his carriage as he dashed backwards and forwards to keep appointments, wrote to Philip : " Things are in such a hurly-burly and confusion that fathers do not know their own children."

He was too old a hand at the game of politics to be impressed by the shouts of the mob. Lung power had not put Elizabeth on the throne nor would it maintain her there ; her advisers might be pleased with their own

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efficiency (Feria was naturally nettled at the quiet way they had ignored him in making their plans), but he knew that Spain's invisible support had given her the crown and that only through Spain's might could she hope to keep it. He was not even convinced that the obnoxious noises in the streets were entirely due to her own popularity ; they were more likely a reaction, he suspected, from the memory of those other cries which still echoed their agony round the not long extinct fires of Smithfield. The danger was that the inexperienced Elizabeth might be misled into taking the applause too seriously and allow the wave of reaction to lead her into some predicament from which even Spanish wisdom would not be able to extricate her.

On November 21st, four days after Mary's death and two days before Elizabeth's entrance into London, Feria sent his first long report to the King. It described in detail the situation to date, carefully distinguishing between observed fact and his own impressions. These despatches, together with the King's answers, constitute a remarkably complete record of the early months of Elizabeth's reign from the Spanish point of view. Only one letter of

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importance is missing, which Feria sent off on November 14th and which was buffeted about at Dover by the frenzied English officials during the two days preceding Mary's death.

The amount of activity that Feria packed into those four days between the 17th and the 21st was incredible. His house was filled at all hours of the day and night with frightened Catholics who rushed to him for protection, with Mary's dismissed office-holders begging to offer their now useless services, with ambitious courtiers who hoped that by making up to the Spanish ambassador they would eventually find themselves on the winning side. Feria himself was trying to establish contact with the members of the new Council that Elizabeth had sworn in on the day after her accession, but these gentlemen were always just off to Hatfield and had no time to talk to him. In the few odd moments of their company that he was able to snatch they either told him nothing or said they had nothing to tell. The amount of information he obtained was, at least in his own opinion, slight, but the amount of gossip he listened to enormous. "I hope," he wrote apologetically, "your Majesty will pardon the disorder and confusion of my letters, for things

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here are going on in such a way that enlightenment on anything is unprocurable, and if I wrote everything she and they say I should never end. . . . Up to the present nothing is certain and everyone talks as his wishes lead him ; I wonder they have not sent me crazy."

However, he managed both to keep his head and to remain in touch with developments. He found out the contents of Mary's will and took steps to see that Philip's substantial legacies under it were not embezzled by the new régime. He looked into the preparations for Mary's funeral and sternly insisted that no least Papist rite should be omitted, no slightest taint of heretical practice included. And with all this he contrived to discover for his master how the land lay with regard to the three primary topics they had discussed before his departure.

The allusions to religion and the French peace treaty were brief ; the ambassador's mind was far more occupied with the third subject. He reported that the "people are more free than ever, the heretics thinking that they will be able to persecute the Catholics," and that "already they have begun to treat the images and religious persons disrespect-

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fully." These demonstrations had, however, ceased after the first day or two and "things in this respect are rather quieter than they were," but the King was warned not to expect the calm to last. The French settlement only came in as an afterthought, the ambassador reporting that the war was highly unpopular and that Elizabeth's subjects were pressing her to withdraw from it without regard to the uncomfortable position in which she would thus leave Spain. It was only a few days later that he remembered to write to Philip for a copy of the relevant treaties, since it occurred to him that "it would be very convenient if these people were bound by treaty" with Spain not to terminate the war on their own initiative. "I have copies of all the treaties here, but as they are in French I do not understand them very well. . . ."

The marriage was the principal theme of the letter and recurs again and again in that spacious composition. Feria had picked up and repeated every item of information, every morsel of gossip that was floating about London on the subject. He had questioned lords and commoners, Catholics and Protestants, natives and foreigners impartially, in order to discover

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what he could of the Queen's inclinations and of the various suitors' chances. He summed up his researches in two sentences: "The more I think over this business, the more certain I am that everything depends upon the husband this woman may take. If he be a suitable one religious matters will go on well and the kingdom will remain friendly to your Majesty, but if not it will all be spoilt."

It was with deep regret he felt himself compelled to tell the King that "the new Queen and her people hold themselves free from your Majesty and will listen to any ambassadors who may come to treat of the marriage." It was therefore of the utmost importance that the affair should go through Philip's hands: "which . . . will be difficult except with great negotiation and money." He begged the King again, as he had begged him in Brussels, to transmit his views. The only two candidates hitherto mentioned in official Spanish circles would not do. Philibert, the Duke of Savoy, an old suitor of Elizabeth's, was entirely out of the running. "For the present I know for certain they will not hear the name of the Duke of Savoy mentioned, as they fear he will want to recover his estates

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with English forces and will keep them constantly at war." As for the Archduke Ferdinand, Philip's cousin and the son of the Holy Roman Emperor, "it will be inconvenient enough for Ferdinand to marry here even if he took the titbit from your Majesty's hand, but very much worse if it were arranged in any other way."

Philip's principal worry, as well as Feria's, had been that the popular hatred of Mary's foreign alliance would induce Elizabeth to take a husband from amongst her own subjects. Such an alliance seemed to the Spaniard only less objectionable than her marriage to a Frenchman. It would, he thought, diminish her personal prestige and limit her choice to one of the small group of hostile Protestants whose fortunes were dependent on her own. He was therefore "very pleased to see that the nobles are all beginning to open their eyes to the fact that it will not do to marry this woman in the country itself."

And so, having canvassed the various alternatives, he came to the prospects of his august master and baldly declared that "if she decides to marry out of the country she will at once fix her eyes on your Majesty." He neither ex-

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plained nor gave authority for his opinion ; it was a hint the King could act on or not as he chose. Feria admitted that what he had said was "only conjecture" and that formidable obstacles lay in the way of such a marriage. Not for a moment did he attempt to conceal from Philip his unpopularity in England. "They say that it is through your Majesty that the country is in such want and that Calais was lost, and also through your not coming to see the Queen our lady she died of sorrow." Even the friendly nobles who opposed Elizabeth's marriage to a subject would be more likely "to pitch upon the Archduke Ferdinand" than upon their former King. But the ambassador could see no reason why, if Philip still wanted to marry Elizabeth and she now wanted to marry him, they should not go ahead with royal indifference to anybody's opinion.

Though diligent in furthering what he thought to be his master's wishes, even to the extent of arranging a marriage for him, Feria plainly showed that he had not come round to Philip's English policy. The only sensible thing for Spain to do, he still thought, was to land a small detachment of veterans from

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Flanders, take over the country and run it to suit herself. "Really this country is more fit to be dealt with sword in hand than by cajolery, for there are neither funds, nor soldiers, nor heads, nor forces. . . ."

He reported that there was no money in the treasury, the coinage was debased, the year's harvest a failure, the population decimated by plague. Robbery and violence were hourly occurrences everywhere in the capital. Loud grumblings were already heard from the disappointed office-seekers whom the victorious Cecil party now in power had left out in the cold, and would spread to the general public when the first demand for taxes was issued. The symptoms of a revolution were unmistakable and Feria warned the King that unless he acted promptly France would get in ahead of him. It was reliably reported that French forces were gathering in Normandy and Scotland for invasion on Mary Stuart's behalf.

Feria was so concerned about this possibility that in the letter of November 25th, which was in effect a postscript to his long report of the 21st, he stepped out of his own province to issue a solemn warning : "I am very much afraid that if the Queen do not send her

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obedience to the Pope or delay doing so, or if he should take into his head to recall matters concerning the divorce of King Henry, there may be a defect in the succession of this Queen which will help to upset the present state of things here more than anything else. Your Majesty will consider whether it will be well to write to Rome and in some good way get the Pope sounded about it to see whether he will act. I think your Majesty ought to do it."

Elizabeth made her state entrance into London on the 23rd. Feria, despite his pessimism about her future, put on his court dress of black velvet and green silk, hung the diamond badge of the Golden Fleece round his neck and went to attend her first reception, determined to arrive at a good understanding with her as soon as possible. Even as he descended the steps of Durham Palace in the Strand he could hear in the distance the shouts of the mob congested in the horse market adjacent to Lord North's house, an old Carthusian monastery in the north-eastern quarter of the City. Elizabeth's whole progress over the flower-strewn roads from Hatfield had been punctuated by outbursts of cheering. At her



DON GOMEZ SUAREZ DE FIGUEROA,
E CORDOUA DUCA DI FERIA, GOVERNATORE
DI MILANO, CAPITAN GENERALE DELL' ESER.
CITO DI S.M. CATT' IN ALEMAGNA etc.

J.S. sc.

THE COUNT DI FERIA

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entrance into London the very guns had been drowned by the thunder of her ovation. The welcome she received that day from her subjects would have thrilled the most triumph-hardened of the Caesars.

The nobility and diplomatic corps waiting under the myriad candles of the great vaulted room were impressed and deeply curious. Most of them had never seen her, though for years she had been a staple of European gossip. In remote cities men who scarcely knew where England lay had discussed her mysterious seclusion, her Spartan habits and attire, the learning about which her tutor, the famous scholar Roger Ascham, had written with ecstasy, her talent for stirring up trouble and her ingenuity in getting out of it. When the heralds' announcement had died away and she entered into the momentarily silent room, the audience saw a young woman "above middle height, and of a well-proportioned figure," who moved with stately and simple elegance. Her costume was of white, her favourite colour, brocaded with gold and lavishly embroidered in pearls : the simple Puritan wardrobe of "Miladi Elizabeth" had been laid aside for ever. The observers agreed that

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her face was “ pleasing rather than beautiful,” and “ that her manner united stately grace with frank condescension.” The extraordinary charm whereby that rogue her father had beguiled honest people into forgetting his villainies was heightened and refined in her, but its origin was as unmistakable as her red hair or her passion for personal adornment. She had Henry’s gift of laughter, though in her its expression was often but an inscrutable hint of mirth in the light blue eyes, “ which are of exceptional beauty,” and the corners of the finely modelled lips. Her only visible legacies from her mother were her slender hands and the oval frame of her face. Her skin, ordinarily pale, showed a faint flush of excitement as she acknowledged a compliment or exchanged a sally in fluent French, Italian or Latin. Every detail of her manner and person was noted, even to the little vanity which insisted on foreigners speaking with her in their own tongues, and her delight in her white shapely hands, “ which she takes care not to conceal.” The unanimous verdict was that in appearance and bearing, at least, this granddaughter of a Welsh freebooter was a true daughter of kings.

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It was the moment to which Elizabeth had looked forward all her life. Less attentive observers than Feria echoed his subsequent words to Philip : "I have never seen her so carried away as she was to-day." Behind her lay many years of neglect, suspicion and mortal danger. She had incredibly survived an infancy of want and privation, when her guardians fought with her father's indifference for the barest necessities of food and clothing ; a girlhood in which only her wits and her courage had saved her under the merciless inquisition of the Protector Somerset's lawyers ; an early womanhood in which even greater wit and greater courage had barely thwarted Stephen Gardiner, Mary's implacable Chancellor, while the block waited outside her window in the Tower. Then Woodstock, then Hatfield, both prisons under milder names. Only three months before she had been on the verge of marriage to a dispossessed princeling and permanent exile abroad. And now she was mounting her father's throne, as even in her moments of deepest despair she had always proudly declared she would do, with the consciousness of a thousand eyes fixed on her in pleasure and admiration. The future held its

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dangers as well as the past, but if wit and courage could save her from extinction they might also prolong the exaltation of this moment for many years to come.

Through a lane hedged with many-coloured silks and precious stones, jewelled orders and sword-hilts, Feria advanced to pay his respects. In hushed curiosity and awe the spectators followed the broad-shouldered figure with the swarthy face, dark cropped beard and crisp silver-threaded hair. The property, perhaps the heads, of many of them might soon be at his mercy. Not improbably it was written on the very next page of the book of the future that the King of Spain would return to England at the head of an invading army or, whispered the knowing, as the Consort of the young Queen. The final decision might well depend on the single will of this man. If to-morrow saw him viceroy of the world's mightiest king, what lay in store for those ambitious young courtiers now grouped round the throne—tall dignified William Cecil, the squat gargoyle Nicholas Bacon, handsome Robert Dudley, so dashing in his silver satin? Or even for the Queen herself, now so flushed and radiant?

If Elizabeth herself was disturbed by such

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thoughts she made no sign. As she caught sight of her brother-in-law's ambassador she smiled a welcome and took off her glove so that he might kiss her hand. Feria had come with the intention, as he later wrote Philip, "of confining myself to compliments," realising that this was not the time and place "to speak of business." Therefore "as my only reason for being here was to serve and advise your Majesty how to gratify her in everything, I proposed also to convey to her the knowledge of things in which your Majesty could be gratified, and so to help forward the good fellowship which I thought both parties wished to preserve."

It was obviously the ambassador's intention to stop here, but as a result perhaps of Elizabeth's special cordiality he too was a bit carried away, and added: "I said your Majesty had ordered me to beg her to be very careful about religious affairs, as they were what first and principally concerned you."

No one in the room, least of all the Queen and her ministers, misunderstood the significance of the ambassador's bold locution. In the language of diplomacy it was equivalent to a blunt notice that if the existing religious

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institution was tampered with Spain's King would be offended and his support withdrawn. Almost in the first minute of her reign, in the midst of what purported to be merely a ceremonial gathering, Elizabeth was called upon without preparation to declare her future policy. A thousand attentive ears were listening eagerly for her answer. Would she dare defy Spain and risk her crown at the very moment she had grasped it? Or would she weakly abandon the friends who had stood by her in the critical months just past, in order to appease the Colossus?

She did neither. Her blue eyes looked into Feria's dark ones with childlike candour as she replied : " It would indeed be bad of me to forget God, who has been so good to me."

Feria was not at all satisfied with this pious avowal which, he told Philip, " appeared to me rather an equivocal reply." He recognised, however, that " a presence-chamber crammed with people " was not the place to pursue the discussion, so he accepted the rebuff, changed the subject and tried to arrange another meeting.

" She told me that when anything had to be discussed with me she would send two of the

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Council. I asked her which two they would be, so that I might know with whom to communicate in case I had anything to say." Elizabeth named Cecil, Parry and the Lord Admiral Clinton, but directly afterwards withdrew the Admiral's name, leaving the Secretary and the Controller, the two councillors to whom the ambassador found it hardest to be civil, as the only channels of communication. Seeing that he was displeased she added that when he wanted anything he was to speak to her personally. This might mean much or little; if her two intermediaries were always to be present it would mean very little indeed. "I know," he wrote to Philip, "that this is a very feeble foundation to begin with," but he did not say so, and "made an appearance of being very highly gratified with this." He was then allowed to bow himself out.

He returned home to reflect on his next step. The interview had been disappointing, and he looked for some way to improve the atmosphere before the next meeting. Various of Elizabeth's phrases at Hatfield and at Lord North's gave him an idea. He crystallised it for Philip in a single sentence: "She is very fond of having things given to her, and her one

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theme is how poor she is." He therefore sent her as a first offering two rings that Philip had given him which had belonged to the late Queen. They were apparently of no great value—Feria refers to them as being amongst the poorest of Mary's jewels—but the prudent Spaniard thought it best to begin modestly until he found out what the results of this form of persuasion would be.

More than two weeks elapsed before he saw her again. In the meantime Philip sent him an assistant, Alvarez de Quadra, the Bishop of Aquila, who was ultimately to succeed him. The Bishop brought over a fresh lot of instructions, the latest information from the Continent, and a valuable gift from Philip to his sister-in-law. He arrived on December 7th, and three days later Feria, somewhat more confident, went to his next audience with the Queen. He arrived in time to speak to her in an ante-room with only a few people present, before she made her entrance into the audience chamber. It seemed a stroke of luck, for it gave him the chance to tell her in comparative privacy that the truce with France had, happily, been extended for two months. Actually the truce had been arranged a fortnight before the

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Bishop arrived in England, but news travelled slowly in those days. On November 28th the tidings of Mary's death, unconfirmed and wrong in nearly every detail, were first being circulated in Paris.

The ambassador expected Elizabeth to greet him as the bearer of good news, since the French war was so unpopular in England. Instead she turned on him and demanded to know what Philip meant by arranging a truce without her consent. For a moment he was mystified by her asperity; then he realised that "she thought it was some trap against her and that your Majesty was leaving her out." In other words she suspected that Philip, after using England's help for his own purposes, was now leaving her in the lurch because it suited his convenience.

The ambassador tried to show her how unjust and unreasonable her suspicions were. Philip would never make peace unless his ally were fully protected; he had proved the honesty of his intentions over and over again. He had always stood loyally by England; now it was England's turn to . . .

His eloquence was cut short when Elizabeth turned her back on him and left the room.

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Feria remained behind to disentangle the causes of her anger. The snub was painfully aggravated by the presence of the very people who would be most delighted by it, Cecil, Parry and the Earls of Pembroke and Bedford, the most unfriendly faction of the Council.

The resourceful Spaniard quickly thought of a way to repair the damage. There reposed in Whitehall a certain box containing some of the finest jewels in the world, the late Queen's wedding presents from her husband and her father-in-law, which Mary had confided on her deathbed to Feria's fiancée. From her he had naturally learned all about the jewels, their history and their present status. He also had the key to the box in which they were kept. Though legally they were Philip's, since his wife had left them to him in her will, there was small chance of the King ever getting his hands on them again. The councillors would see to that. "They tell me," wrote Feria, who was always being surprised at the offhand English attitude toward deceased royalty, "that this is the way the wills of the Kings of England are always fulfilled: that is to say as the Council likes." Moreover he strongly suspected several of the Council of intending to

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appropriate the jewels for themselves. If he gave them to Elizabeth as a freewill offering from Philip, not only would she be vastly pleased and "these people's" wicked intentions exposed, but the gift would cost nothing.

He called the four councillors together and courteously asked them, particularly Cecil, "the man who does everything," to go in and explain the matter of the truce in their own words; since their English was so much better than his they would be able to make it clearer to her. At the same time they might have the privilege of telling her about the box of jewels in Whitehall. He retained the key, however, explaining that he would give it to the Queen himself when he came in. The quartette agreed to do as they were asked ; it would scarcely have been wise to conceal from Elizabeth the offer of a collection of precious stones. Having given them time to perform their errand, Feria entered the presence-chamber and squeezed his way through the crowd to the throne.

Elizabeth pounced on him at once and wanted to know more about this sudden generosity on the part of her brother-in-law. The conversation in the ante-chamber was fresh in her

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mind ; she suspected that the offer of the jewels was too pat to be a mere coincidence. Was it true that they were being given to her out of sheer brotherly love or was there some other motive—acquiescence in whatever treaty Philip chose to make for her with France, for instance ? The ambassador blandly repeated that his master would be very pleased for her to have the jewels if she wanted them.

Elizabeth clung to her suspicions. Though not so old in experience as Feria, she found it difficult to believe that she was being given something for nothing. She demanded the exact words of Philip's instructions with reference to the jewels. Feria, having no instructions, improvised some. " I told her the only instructions I had were that your Majesty would be glad for her to take anything she wanted of what belonged to you, as a good brother should."

Elizabeth thought this over for an instant, relented, and accepted the treasure. She smiled her sweetest upon Feria, begged him to transmit to Philip her thanks and the assurance of her eternal devotion. In front of the entire company she made amends for the little scene in the ante-chamber. Her heart suddenly

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warmed towards her brother-in-law and his representative. "She was full of fine words for me," Feria wrote dispassionately, "and told me that when people said she was French I was not to believe it. I said I had never heard such a thing, nor did I believe anyone in the world was so foolish as to think so. . . ."

He then hurried away, glad to have saved his face and rather pleased at his own adroit manœuvre in converting a private snub into a public triumph. On his return home he sent her the ring which the Bishop of Aquila had brought over. The messenger he chose was Thomas Parry, both because he was one of the two ministers the Queen had designated to receive communications and because the Controller would not fail to tell his colleagues of this friendly little transaction between himself and their mistress.

The ambassador decided, however, not to see Elizabeth again until she sent for him. There were various reasons for this course. At the end of his first four weeks in England he was not at all satisfied with the way things were going. The Queen, far from accepting him as her chief mentor and guide, had made it impossible for him to see her alone and difficult

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to see her at all. Though she professed to be grateful to Philip for his various kindnesses in the past, she seemed to hold the strange notion that she owed her throne to nobody but God, who had made her a king's daughter, and to the good will of her people. And by the people she meant not the nobility but the masses. There was no use trying to explain such ideas as these to the King ; Feria did not even attempt to explain them. It was enough that they led her towards irreligion and other courses which must soon prove her ruin. Moreover her instability was more than feminine ; it surpassed anything he had ever seen. And her slippery evasiveness whenever he tried to come to grips with her on an important question frequently made it exceedingly hard for him to keep his temper.

"It gives me great trouble," he wrote Philip after the interview of December 10th, "every time I write to your Majesty not to be able to send more pleasing intelligence, but what can be expected from a country governed by a Queen and she a young lass, who, although sharp, is without prudence, and is every day standing up against religion more openly ? The kingdom is entirely in the hands of young

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folks, heretics and traitors, and the Queen does not favour a single man whom her Majesty who is now in Heaven would have received. . . ."

Nevertheless his logic told him that in spite of Elizabeth's fine show of independence it was her ministers who ruled both her and the country. It could not be otherwise. Feria himself was finding these fellows tough customers and his political education had begun before Elizabeth was born. It was they rather than she whom he held responsible primarily for the various unsettling measures which had blemished the first three weeks of the new reign. He resolved to see what he could do with the Council while giving Elizabeth a chance to discover her real friends. She would soon find out how little able her "young folks, heretics and traitors" were to give presents or useful advice. He, for his part, with his army of spies in the Palace, would keep a vicarious eye on her doings.

In the meantime he continued to hold secret conferences with discontented Catholic leaders and to wait for instructions from Brussels which would make all this milk-and-water diplomacy unnecessary.

CHAPTER IV

CECIL'S GANG

THERE was no part of his work that Feria relished less than his contacts with the Privy Council. The majority of its members were strangers to him, since most of Mary's council had been replaced by newcomers. Usually he was not even able to spell their names and had to fall back on wild phonetic guesses like "Xeromberi" for Shrewsbury. He was accustomed to princes of the blood or of the Church, soldiers or prelates, men like the Duke of Alba or Cardinal Granvella, in the Cabinet of a sovereign. Warlike or princely were the last adjectives he would have applied to the leading members of the new Government, smooth-spoken William Cecil, the hideous puffy-cheeked lawyer Nicholas Bacon, or that huge good-natured lump of flesh, Thomas Parry. They were the sons of squires and successful business men who had grown rich on property stolen from the Church, and were in politics to keep what they had and get more. He found their manners churlish

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and their brains a compound of stupidity and low cunning.

He did not flatter himself that he on his part had inspired them with any greater affection. Like their Queen they seemed to prefer the ambassador's company in a crowd or, better yet, not at all. He had tried to suppress his own feelings and make the first friendly overtures as soon as the names of the first new councillors were published, two days after Elizabeth's accession, but they avoided him with one excuse or evasion after another. If by any chance he tried to talk to one of them in the Palace he found himself drawn into an obscure corner or, if out of doors in St. James's Park, behind a tree. "Truly," he complained to the King in an attempt to explain his early ill-success with the Council, "they run away from me as if I were the devil." They concocted their measures without consulting him, parried his inquiries with lies or pretended ignorance and seemed to take pleasure in acts which they knew must exasperate him.

On the very first day of the new reign the ports were closed and for a short period he was unable to communicate with the Continent. It was of the highest importance that Philip,

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if he was to drive a satisfactory bargain with the French, should be kept informed of sentiment in England, and that Feria himself should learn how the situation on the Continent stood from day to day. The ambassador tried bribes, threats and cunning, but neither the officials on the coast nor their superiors at Whitehall were to be bought, browbeaten or deceived. It was not the act of closing the ports to which he took exception ; the precaution was customary on the accession of a new sovereign, since it was desirable that spies should not escape to spread information or come in to make trouble during the disorderly interval of change. What he objected to was being put on the same footing as the other resident legates. In Mary's time the Spanish ambassador, during his King's long absences, had been a sort of Prime Minister, and free from the restrictions and indignities put upon his colleagues of the diplomatic corps. This new clique was treating him like any Frenchman or Italian, instead of acknowledging his special status as the representative of England's protector and the greatest king on earth.

His fury increased when he learned that not only were his despatches held up, but that

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they were in all probability read while his messengers drank and diced in seaside taverns. He was sure of it from the knowing manner in which the Queen and her aides referred to various secrets between himself and his master. He took immediate steps to stop the leakage by arranging with Philip for a new set of codes.

The Council set to work at once on the disordered finances of the country. They called in economists and assayers to help them restore the debased coinage, a task which in the three previous reigns had been given up as hopeless. They ordered the collection of debts owing to the late Queen and paid those she had left, the only one of her conditions they ever attempted to carry out. To tide over current necessities they sent Sir Thomas Gresham to raise a loan in Flanders.

Feria vainly objected, ignorant of the fact that it was Elizabeth herself who, on the day after her accession, had given Gresham his instructions. Feria disliked both the celebrated financier and his mission. While Mary lived Gresham had made himself odious by his all too realistic descriptions of Spain's abuses and misfortunes in the Netherlands. His restoration to the royal service and his knighthood

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were entirely owing to his friendship with the detestable Cecil. It was also iniquitous that Philip's subjects should lend their savings abroad when their own prince did not know where to turn for money. Philip's every letter contained a fresh lament on this subject. Although he had more subjects to tax than any other king in Europe, although his overworked slaves were dying by thousands in the mines and plantations that more ships might bring ever richer cargoes from the Indies, he had to pay higher interest for loans and give more exorbitant security than anyone else. Frequently he was compelled to seize and pledge the goods of his own merchants as they arrived in the ports of Spain, a necessary measure but one which led to endless trouble. Yet he was lord of both Milan and Antwerp, the two principal money markets of Europe. It was small consolation to Feria, who rated England's stability and therefore her credit very low, that the perverse Flemish bankers would probably never see their money again; their loss would in the end fall indirectly on Philip.

He no more approved of the destination of Gresham's loans than of their source. A large part was to be spent in the reconstruction of the

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navy, which was obviously sheer waste. Spanish experience had proved that the real importance of ships in war was to convey troops, and the English had no troops to convey. The money should, suggested the ambassador, be devoted to the more useful purpose of creating an efficient army. Soldiers were the best bulwarks against trouble at home, and if they were needed abroad Spain would always undertake their transport to the scene of action. But the councillors closed their ears to his reasoning and, with their eyes fixed on some remote strategical dream, continued to build their preposterous ships. It was thirty years before these two theories were tested against each other, in the heroic summer of 1588.

But worse was to follow. The new ministers presently began to tamper with the established religion. The period of quiet upon which Feria had remarked in his letter of November 21st was near an end. The early returns from the parliamentary elections came in during December, and it was evident that the ruling group would obtain a majority in the House of Commons. Feria was not greatly surprised; he had hardly expected the ministers to allow the people a free choice of representatives. He

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was, however, probably not far off the mark when he insisted to Philip that most of the English were still Catholic. What he never came to realise was that an Englishman might receive the sacraments, pay his tithes and yet consider the Holy See a hostile foreign power ; he recognised his parish priest, whether married or not, but thought that Rome was further off than heaven. This misconception on Feria's part was shared by his successors and was largely responsible for Spain's costly blunders during the forty years which were to follow.

The change in the religious policy proceeded so slowly and cautiously that the watchful Spaniard could at first detect little more than a subtle difference in the atmosphere. New faces appeared at court, fugitives from Mary's persecutions returned from abroad. Feria was struck at Elizabeth's first audiences with the fact that "every heretic and traitor seems to have risen from the tomb to welcome her accession." Though the Queen and her Court continued to hear Mass on Sundays, it was a Mass so transformed that a true believer would scarcely have recognised it. Practices from Edward VI's time began to reappear, such as the Litany in English and other blasphemous

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innovations. Bishops loyal to the Church were removed and others of laxer views appointed in their place. It was rumoured that the new Parliament would eventually force a complete separation from Rome and again set up the English Church as in Henry's time. Though this final disaster had not yet occurred the drift towards Protestantism had already gone too far : Feria determined to check it before it went further.

He was dismayed to find that he could hope for little help from his King in the struggle with heresy. During this unsettled period, when he was straining every nerve to keep the Queen and her country from succumbing to the wiles of the schismatics, he learned from a Spanish agent abroad that forty preachers were coming from Geneva, the seat of heresy, to spread false doctrine in England. Feria was as resolutely opposed to the admission of these sour-faced Calvinists as to the export of their English counterparts into Holland. This particular consignment was peculiarly odious, since it was made up of Spanish proselytes, and he asked Philip for authority to deal with them in his own fashion. "I have decided in accord with Friar Juan de Villagarcia and Dr.

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Velasco to try and seize them, their wickedness being proved, and throw them into the river. I must do it so dexterously and secretly as to give no ground for complaint to the Queen or her people."

But Philip shrank from drowning as a cure for heresy, even though it was reported that Calvin himself was to accompany the invaders. The Inquisition in Spain, the persecutions of the Duke of Alba in the Netherlands and of Bishop Bonner in England were instruments of a holy cause, but his kindly instincts deprecated such severity save in cases of extreme necessity. Moreover it would be impolitic to offend Elizabeth by so gross an interference with her hospitality as the summary despatch of her forty guests to the bottom of the Thames.

Such pusillanimity was a constant trial to Feria. Philip would neither take the natural course of forcibly compelling England to remain Catholic, nor consent to the measures which were patently required to keep her from exposure to contamination. He even neglected to act on a plain hint when the opportunity arose to have Calvin quietly assassinated on the Continent. Only the ambassador's native courtesy and the respect due to royalty tempered

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his expressions of impatience with his sovereign's weakness.

It was plain that Elizabeth herself would never prove a barrier against reform. While the King procrastinated the Queen danced. When she was not dancing she flirted or hunted or gave parties on the Thames. Amongst the few evidences of her interest in religion was a report that she had eliminated certain portions of the Roman ritual as too "heathenish." She was far more occupied with the preparations for her coronation. She placed an embargo on the export of crimson silk, which was to form part of her scheme of decoration, and sent a man to Flanders to buy up the famous products of the Flemish looms for her own and her retainers' clothes. Two expert negotiators were appointed to bargain for the magnificent collection of gold plate left by her late enemy, Cardinal Pole. A warning was issued to the criminal classes of the metropolis that they need not hope for the customary royal pardon if they molested the country folk expected in London for the great ceremony.

Her preparations aroused Feria's irony. It was absurd that she should go on blithely as if she expected a long and prosperous reign when

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it was clear to anyone with eyes to see that she was rapidly heading for destruction. Even the fortune-tellers and astrologers, Feria reported, were "now saying that she will reign a very short time." As an enlightened man of the world he could not allow himself to take the popular superstitions seriously, and deplored the fact that even good Catholics were addicted to them. But while rejecting the premises he accepted the conclusions of the prophets and added on his own account, that "the true prophecy is that this nation is very fond of novelty, and she is beginning to govern in a way which gives reasonable hopes of a change every hour." The soothsayers, after reading the stars, thought she would last about a year; Feria, on more mundane evidence, gave her rather less.

With Philip frittering away his opportunities and Elizabeth her time Feria recognised that the only hope of saving the Church lay in better relations with the Council. Through them the reform movement might yet be stemmed and the Queen suitably and safely married.

The matrimonial crisis, incidentally, was becoming acute. Three weeks earlier the choice had seemed to lie between some one of Philip's protégés and a subject, and the ambas-

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sador had gathered from the pro-Spanish nobles that the danger of the latter was slight. But by December 14th the whole outlook had altered. "Everybody thinks," he now told Philip, "that she will not marry a foreigner." It was the ministers who had brought about this change by their unceasing pressure on her to take an English husband and be free of foreign entanglements : the ministers must, therefore, be brought, in this as in other matters, to submit their will to Philip's.

The means by which the ambassador hoped to accomplish this miracle was the oldest, the simplest and the most reliable known to the arts of diplomacy and politics. One of his first thoughts after Mary's death had been the position of Spain's pensioners in England, and in his letter of November 21st he wrote to the King : "Your Majesty's servants and pensioners here are already beginning to look upon themselves as dismissed without anything being said to them. I do not know what had better be done, whether to let them go thus without saying anything and pay only those we need, or to dismiss them. I think it would be better to say nothing, but to pay those we want and some fresh ones. I await commands.

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If the Queen does not ask for a list of those in your pay or speak of the matter, I think it will be better not to stir it up, because if she should say that we are not to pay anybody, and afterwards found out that we did so, she would naturally be offended."

But by the middle of December the ambassador was no longer satisfied to advise payment and lie back to await commands. Not only did the situation now demand that the pensions be paid at once—he had already decided whom it was necessary to pay, and how much.

The request for additional funds depressed Philip more profoundly than even the melancholy news and doleful forecasts which made up the bulk of his ambassador's letter. He examined the state of his exchequer, consulted with his financial advisers, and sighed wearily at the result. There was nothing to do but pay, however; the ambassador had made the consequences of refusal only too clear. With repeated references to his poverty and the need for economy, he wrote agreeing to continue the pensions and to leave their disbursement to the ambassador's discretion. One instalment was to be remitted immediately, he promised, and the rest would follow as soon as he was able to raise it.

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Never before had any monarch found the system of pensions so expensive as Philip. In order to keep his vast ramshackle empire together he had constantly to fight one half of Europe while paying the other half not to fight him. England had been especially costly. The strong and outspoken opposition to his marriage with Mary had made it necessary to conciliate the leaders of opinion, both lay and religious, in order to get himself accepted by the country at all. After the marriage the expense became even greater. The English, indifferent to their King's grandiose schemes and unmoved by his troubles, were only induced to help him after their high officials had been won over by further bribes. The fact that he was out of the country so much of the time demanded a greater liberality to his pensioners than if he had been able to stay and keep an eye on them. Moreover they were, or pretended to be, under the illusion that with a large part of Europe and most of America to pay him tribute he must be rolling in money, and they fixed their prices accordingly. Over and over again he complained that he could not afford to go on, but in the end he always did, being even less able to afford the risk of England's

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lapsing into neutrality or worse. While the people cursed him for the money he took out of the country for his foreign wars, the officials accepted the considerable amounts he sent in and gave him no credit for them.

Feria, at least, was an improvement on preceding ambassadors. His expenditure of his master's money was so careful and his accounting so precise as to earn Philip's warm and grateful praise. He began with promises rather than cash, and these promises only went so far as the end of the current year. Very few of the old pensioners of Mary's time were secure in office for even so long, and most of these were now of too little importance in the Council to be worth retaining on Spain's pay roll.

He found his task surprisingly complicated : the ministers, including many of the former pensioners, showed a sudden and unexpected reluctance to accept Spanish money in secret. It was not, he realised, their scruples that deterred them, but fear lest Elizabeth should find out and be displeased. This, together with their reluctance to be seen with him, rendered negotiations difficult.

Only two accepted at once without un-

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necessary fuss, the Lord High Admiral Clinton and Lord William Paget. The Admiral's devotion to Spain and the Catholic cause had not hitherto been conspicuous, but he was worth cultivating. He was still in his prime and a sailor of exceptional talent and energy. Paget, however, was already out of office and "dying as fast as he can" from a complication of ague and other ailments. His pension was Feria's sole concession to sentiment; the ambassador argued that he could not abandon an old friend of Spain because he was down and out, especially one who, like the former Lord Privy Seal, was well connected and might still have some influence. Paget took what was given and laughed at the giver for wasting his money. "He joked with me about the scant services your Majesty had received for the pensions granted here. . . ." Paget's one notable exertion during the brief remainder of his life was to prove the point of his own joke by helping to upset a deep-laid scheme of Philip's for the return of England to Catholicism.

The conduct of Mary's disappointed office-holders confirmed Feria's worst fears. The former Chamberlain, "this scurvy" Hastings, for instance, who for years had drawn his

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pension without protest, was now going about the country saying that the late Queen had made vast loans to Philip which had not been repaid, that it was because of Spain that England was impoverished and Calais lost, that Mary had died of a broken heart because of Philip's neglect. There was nothing Feria could do to refute these slanders ; if he were to buy the silence of all the dismissed and disgruntled, there would be nothing left for the people who now actively managed affairs. In the course of his labours Feria learned the error of the common definition of the word " pension " : it appeared to mean payment for favours to be granted in the future rather than for services rendered in the past.

Quietly, thrifitly, secretly—above all secretly—he made opportunities for apparently casual meetings with the new councillors, investigated their financial resources, studied their weaknesses, dropped ambiguous hints of practical ways in which they might benefit by the King of Spain's generosity. Nothing was overlooked. It was not his fault if men's actions were perverse and his spies remiss or badly informed. Hearing that Dr. Wotton, one of the Peace Commissioners, was on his way to England from Brussels

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to become Archbishop of Canterbury, he advised Philip to send him off "in a very good humour and offer him a pension or refer him to me to pay him one here." But Wotton refused the archbishopric, being content apparently with the rich deaneries of Canterbury and York (he was the only man who ever enjoyed the perquisites of both simultaneously) and the excitements of diplomacy. At about the same time Feria found out that Elizabeth was sending Lord Cobham, a man whom he despised, on a private diplomatic mission to Philip and quickly wrote: "Your Majesty should have him well housed and treated, and a handsome chain or something should be given to him. I have written to my brother-in-law asking him to entertain him and to win his good graces. . . ." Unfortunately the spy sent along to observe Cobham's doings went to sleep at Dover, and Cobham crossed without him. Feria angrily asked the King to see that the man received the punishment he deserved.

Despite these misadventures the ambassador soon had a sound working knowledge of the men closest to the Queen, their characters and the degree of their influence. Those whom he had his eye on especially were Cecil, Parry,

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Lord Robert Dudley, Master of the Horse, and the Earl of Bedford. He recommended to Philip that each of the four receive a thousand crowns, a substantial annuity in that day, and added : “ I will tell them this as soon as a good opportunity offers.”

His principal quarry was William Cecil, a “ very clever but mischievous man,” the first of the Council to be chosen by the Queen, and around whom it revolved to such an extent that Feria on one occasion referred to it briefly as the Secretary’s “ gang.” Cecil had inherited a large fortune, which made him more difficult to bribe than other less useful people. Practically all his adult life had been spent in Government service. He had been Secretary of State under Edward VI before he was thirty, and at thirty-eight, his age on Elizabeth’s accession, he was already one of the most experienced politicians in Europe. Foreigners considered him the typical Englishman. One of Feria’s successors wrote of him : “ As he has never been on the Continent he thinks that England is all the world,” and though the description contained an error of detail, since he had made a flying visit to Holland in 1557, it was in essence true. The same authority



WILLIAM CECIL
LORD BURLEIGH

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declared that “Cecil’s principal detestation is the Catholic faith.” This was also an error, of another sort. Cecil had no detestations ; he simply distrusted all foreigners, whether they were Spanish, French, Italian or Dutch, ally or enemy. He held the simple creed that isolation favoured prosperity, whilst entanglement with the rest of Europe brought war and hard times. He was sceptical about the most fervent vows of friendship from the Continental Powers and their diplomats, being firmly convinced that what they were after was English help in extracting their burnt chestnuts from some fire of their own kindling. He was quite without humour ; on very rare occasions he was known to venture a joke, but usually bungled it and hurried to explain what he meant in his own sober, literal way.

The Queen teased him, bullied him, heaped reproaches on his benign and handsome head when things were going badly, until he took to his bed and moaned into the sympathetic ears of his wife that he was ill and would have to resign. But Elizabeth could always coax him into better health and humour. He was the perfect instrument for carrying out her will, stable when she was capricious, steadfast

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when she grew frightened, thoroughly in sympathy with her desire to avoid extremes. In the course of her long reign one or another of her succession of brilliant favourites would now and then cause her to zigzag for a moment in her course, but in the end she was always back in the middle of the road with her plodding Secretary.

Most of the ruling clique in the Council were bound to Cecil by ties of blood or business. Nicholas Bacon had been his intimate friend at Cambridge, and later each of them, after losing his first wife, had married one of the erudite daughters of Sir Anthony Cooke. Both ladies successfully transmitted the family genius through their sons, Anne Bacon becoming the mother of the great Sir Francis, and Mildred Cecil (whom in a moment of irritation Feria described as "a tiresome bluestocking") the mother of Robert, the first Lord Salisbury. Nicholas himself was a man of sound legal learning, an engaging wit and a sturdy independence of mind. In person he was grotesque, with enormous fleshy cheeks which nearly hid his eyes and mouth, and a short squat body that only moved after a great effort of will. His appearance was the subject of many con-

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temporary squibs, of which his own were much the most amusing.

Thomas Parry, whom Feria ranked next after Cecil in power over the Queen, was a distant cousin to the Secretary. His family name was Vaughan, but his father's Christian name being Harry he was called, after the Welsh fashion, Thomas ap Harry, which he abbreviated for convenience' sake to the name by which he was known. Like many enormously fat men he was a mixture of cunning and good humour. He had been Elizabeth's steward during all the perilous years of her girlhood, had been imprisoned because of her, and she was deeply attached to him. He did not live long to enjoy the honours and the income that the somewhat breathless change of fortune had brought, dying in 1560. The twin poets, Henry and William Vaughan, were amongst his descendants.

Lord Robert Dudley was neither a member of the Council nor a friend of Cecil. He was a young soldier of twenty-five, dashing in manner, handsome of face and figure, with a quick tongue and an unusual flair for clothes and Court intrigue. He was the son of that Duke of Northumberland who had died at the

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head of an anti-Marian rebellion in 1553, a treason now grown so respectable that the son had been crowned with the halo of the father's martyrdom.

Though they were joined by strong common interests, since both were of parvenu origin and equally hated by the ancient Catholic families, the young lord and the Secretary disliked each other so cordially that they were rarely to be found on the same side of any public question. For nearly thirty years Elizabeth was to have Cecil gently murmuring his policy into one ear while Robert insinuated its opposite into the other. She now and again gave in temporarily to Dudley, but in the nick of time changed her mind and, nearly always with good reason, plumped for Cecil. Yet she made Robert earl of Leicester seven years before his rival was granted the barony of Burleigh.

She trusted Cecil and her intelligence worked with his, but she loved Dudley. No other human being in the course of her life aroused such deep, lasting, turbulent emotion in her. They were of the same age and to the superstitious their destinies seemed intertwined in the stars. "Five or six clergymen," wrote Bishop

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de Quadra, Feria's successor, "have been degraded as necromancers and wizards, in whose possession were found calculations of the nativity of the Queen and Lord Robert. . . ." In her middle age her errant and erotic fancies fell in turn on younger men, on Hatton, Raleigh, Essex and to a lesser degree on others. She craved their flattery, she executed the conventional figures of romance, but no one ever stirred her as did the lover of her youth. She honoured and disgraced, petted and insulted him as the mood took her. She kept him living in hopes of becoming King of England, and let him die in disappointment because her jealousy would not allow him to accept the throne of Holland. She would not have him as a husband herself, yet thought him too good for any other woman on earth.

The opportunity to bribe this quartette of principals was slow in coming. Feria was afraid to approach them too openly until they gave him encouragement, for fear they would at once turn round and tell the Queen. It would be better to lead them to compromise themselves first by asking for Philip's money.

Meantime he was beginning to make progress with some of their important colleagues.

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He was able to report that the new Lord Treasurer, the venerable Marquess of Winchester, and the new Chamberlain, Lord William Howard, had both accepted the pensions offered them. These successes were the most gratifying he had yet gained, since the Marquess had defeated and Howard had replaced the Earl of Arundel, whom Feria particularly detested. At the time of Elizabeth's accession Arundel had been the head of the English peace delegation, and the principal thorn in Philip's side at the Cercamps conference. Immediately he heard of Mary's death he returned to England, where the gossips said he could have anything he wanted, including the Queen's hand. Feria was greatly relieved when the Queen not only refused him the Treasury, on which he had set his heart, but appointed Howard, Spain's pensioner, to take over his duties with the peace delegation. But just as the ambassador began to think that things were looking up, he received a violent and unexpected shock.

On first learning of Howard's appointment Feria had sent him a friendly invitation to come and have a talk. The ambassador anticipated no great difficulty in winning him over: he

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had already made “ great offers of service ” to one of Feria’s agents. As a son of the greatest Catholic house in England and a sufferer from the rivalry of plebeian upstarts, Howard’s instincts and interests both attached him to the side of Spain. He nursed a temporary grievance because he thought that he had not received the rewards in the previous reign to which his birth and merits entitled him, but Feria did not doubt that a few words of flattery and the promise of a pension would dispel it. It should then be a simple matter to find out what instructions the Chamberlain was taking with him to the conference ; the task of the Spanish commissioners would be made very much easier if one could find out for them how far Spain need go in the bargaining with France. The ambassador had all along suspected that the English, whose stubbornness had broken up the earlier conference, were keeping a milder set of terms in reserve, but his spies had not been able to discover what they were.

Howard answered at once to say that he would be delighted to come, “ with many demonstrations of friendship and offers of service,” which the ambassador took for what they were worth. He greeted the Chamberlain

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as an old friend, and met his grievance with the explanation that the King had always intended to promote Howard's interests with Mary in person, but had been detained in Flanders until it was too late. Philip was not the man, however, to forget his debts of honour to his friends : as proof of the fact he had sent word that he would be pleased to continue for the future the pension that Howard had enjoyed in the past. To this he would add annually a sable coat worth thirty pounds, the perquisite of the Lord Chamberlain's office, which the King was delighted to see so worthily filled.

There was no necessity—Feria emphasised this point strongly—for anyone to know anything about the money ; the remittance would be made under cover by Luis de Paz, a Spanish agent in London. The Chamberlain “ accepted . . . with his usual profusion of thanks,” and took his leave. Feria was satisfied that he would have the desired information in due course.

A few days later he learned that Howard and his train were leaving almost immediately, and were to stop and see Philip in Brussels instead of proceeding direct to the Conference.

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This plan had been kept dark, and the ambassador was very anxious to know what was at the bottom of it. "Up to the present I have not been able to find out for what purpose, as they are so careful to conceal things from me." His spies had failed him again. He sent Luis de Paz, the agent previously mentioned, to Howard "to say how glad I was, and that as on such occasions people always wanted ready money, Luiz de Paz would pay him what was due." The ambassador sympathetically recognised that the strain on Howard's purse for the expenses of travelling and entertainment would be large, and anticipated that he would be touched by this thoughtful and magnanimous gesture.

Howard returned the staggering answer "that he was provided with money for the present, and that hitherto he had done no more than other councillors and did not require the money." Feria was dumbfounded. Something extraordinary must have occurred since their interview, and he could not imagine what it was. The part about having enough money was obviously ridiculous: the Spaniard had never heard of anybody who had enough money, and certainly it would not have been true of the

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pampered and extravagant English nobleman with whom he was dealing. The reference to the other councillors indicated not only that the Chamberlain had been listening to bad advice, but that the outlook for the ambassador's future efforts with his pensions was distinctly unpromising. And he had not yet extracted from the Chamberlain what he wanted to know.

Before he could recover from this blow he sustained another. Howard sent a servant to say that he had thought the matter over and had again changed his mind. "He could not accept what I had offered him previously until he knew the Queen's pleasure, but that now she had given her consent, he would be glad if I would send him the money. This is to let your Majesty see," added Feria bitterly, "what sort of people these are."

The secret he had worked so hard to keep was out. Elizabeth knew that he was bribing her servants after she had expressly ordered the practice of pensions to be discontinued, and Feria braced himself for an explosion.

It did not come. Instead the Queen sweetly told him, when next they met, that there was no objection as far as she was concerned to his spending his master's money that way if he

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liked. She even saw a possible economy in using people whose wages somebody else was paying and "hoped your Majesty would not be offended if she employed some of the servants you had here." Feria, making the best of a bad business, answered that on the contrary Philip would "be very pleased thereat, and that if she wanted any of the servants or subjects of your Majesty in your other kingdoms you would willingly send them to her." Honest Spaniards who took their pay openly could not be less useful, and were certainly less trying and expensive, than these secret pensioners who were neither secret nor earned their pensions.

The system was not abandoned and Spanish legates continued to scheme and pay long after Feria left England, long even after Elizabeth's death, but he was by now fairly well disgusted with it. He recommended to Philip that the surplus which remained of the money the King had raised with such difficulty be distributed amongst the loyal bishops in the Tower rather than "these renegades who have sold their God and the honour of their country." With few exceptions the only people who were eager to be bribed were useless nonentities, cast-off

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functionaries and hangers-on of the Court. These last, indeed, began to show a sudden enthusiasm for the ambassador's company when it became known that he had large sums to give away to deserving Englishmen. The young gentlemen of fashion who were going abroad in Howard's train crowded round and clamoured for a share, promising to throw their influence in Spain's favour during the peace deliberations. The ambassador dismissed these pests without ceremony and wrathfully wrote to Philip that "a great company of young sparks . . . are asking for payment of your Majesty's money to go and dance in France with, which I intend very few of them shall do."

The Howard fiasco taught him another lesson which thereafter altered his outlook in an important respect. He began to see that what he had taken to be the Queen's leading strings were really reins whose guidance the Council obeyed with a wholesome fear of being caught stumbling. It was Elizabeth, and not the ministers, upon whom the success of his mission chiefly depended. He was not yet ready to go as far as Michiel Surian, the Venetian ambassador in Brussels, who, as a result of the reports

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of his own correspondents in London, was writing to the Doge that "owing to her great courage and power of mind, being similar to the King her father (she) declines to rely on any one but herself, though she is most gracious to all." Nor did he suspect the number of Privy Council resolutions that lay in Cecil's private archives endorsed in his hand "Disallowed by the Queen"—nearly all of them vetoed because they proposed some ill-advised excess, some deviation from the safe middle course. But he decided to abandon his attitude of dignified aloofness and try once more what could be done with Elizabeth in person.

CHAPTER V

THOUGHTS ON MATRIMONY

THE mere matter of seeing Elizabeth and talking to her was not difficult ; she was accessible to far less important people than the Spanish ambassador. Her personal courage was as great as her political instincts were cautious, and foreign observers were constantly astonished by her fearlessness in allowing strangers to approach her. But Feria was not interested in her public audiences ; he wanted to talk to her in private, where he would not be handicapped by the presence of his enemies and exposed to further humiliations such as he had already suffered.

The chief impediment was the Queen's gregariousness. She seemed to have people about her at all hours of the day and night, and her entertainments went on until dawn in an age when business appointments were regularly made for eight o'clock in the morning. True, as Feria had already reported to Philip, Elizabeth had invited him at Lord North's to come and see her personally when he

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wanted anything, but since she had ordered him to make his appointments through Cecil and Parry it seemed very probable that she would not be alone when he came.

The first result of Howard's financial contortions, which reached their climax at the beginning of December, was the attempt to carry out a plan which had been in the back of Feria's mind since Elizabeth's accession. If he could induce the Queen to give him apartments in Whitehall, it would solve the problem of access and leave him free from the intrusion of the councillors. In Mary's time the Spanish ambassador had been installed in the Palace, and although he was no longer the Queen's privileged minister, he had certainly, argued Feria, a greater right to her intimacy than the other ambassadors.

He made his first approach through his changeable friend Howard and the Earl of Pembroke, a nobleman of equally resilient nature and one who also appeared on Feria's list of prospective pensioners, though at some distance from the top. The ambassador told the pair that he hoped the matter could be settled in a friendly way between themselves and the Queen. They agreed to have a try,

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but instead of approaching Elizabeth privately, as he had requested, submitted his proposal to the chill scrutiny of the entire Council. "These people are so cursedly contrary," fumed the ambassador, "that they must all meet, as I am told, to discuss the question."

The answer came by way of the Chamberlain from the Queen herself, however, and was "to the effect that she was astonished at my asking such a thing, which had never been granted to the minister of any prince." Elizabeth, aware that this was not strictly true, qualified her refusal "by words of compliment, and explaining that it was done for me during the late Queen's life because she was the wife of your Majesty, whilst she (Elizabeth) was still unmarried." Feria did not understand the relevance of the last five words until a few days later.

He declined to accept the answer as final. "I did not want to be beaten," he grimly told Philip, "and seeing it could not be done through the Chamberlain I bethought me to try the Secretary." Howard had again proved a broken reed, but the Count believed that Cecil could do anything with his fellow-ministers. He sent his able assistant, Bishop

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de Quadra, to tell the Secretary “ how sorry I was that the Chamberlain had treated the matter more as a courtier than as a man of business, and that since the Queen thought my request unreasonable I was desirous that the matter should be explained to her by him (Cecil).” De Quadra was instructed to explain to Cecil that he was being consulted so that the Queen would realise that the request had been made only after the best available advice had been taken—a flattering distinction between Howard and himself which it was hoped that Cecil would appreciate, as well as the touch about “ the courtier ” and “ the man of business.”

The Bishop went on to repeat to the Secretary his superior’s arguments, the gist of which Feria recounted in his next letter. “ For the sake of convenience in negotiating with her Majesty and the members of her Council, who were so numerous ” (far too numerous, Feria had already explained, either for convenience in handling or economy in purchasing) “ it would be just to give me rooms in the Palace like one of themselves, as I was here for the purpose of serving her in all things, and because of its not having been done to any

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other minister it did not at all follow that rooms should not be given to me, as I was a servant of her Majesty's brother, and such close friendship existed between them, and moreover it would be well for our common enemies to see how your Majesty's affairs were conducted here." The most important reason—that the councillors had an inconvenient habit of intruding whenever Feria wanted to talk to the Queen alone—was naturally not mentioned in the interview between de Quadra and Cecil.

The Secretary acknowledged that he had heard the request discussed in Council, but would not commit himself on its merits, merely observing that it "really did appear extraordinary to him as the Queen would not introduce any innovations in the royal household."

To the Bishop, like many another diplomat both before and after, this seemed merely an expression of the English mentality rather than a logical argument. He pressed Cecil for further and better reasons, and the Secretary finally confessed that Elizabeth thought it improper that an eligible bachelor like the Count should sleep under the same roof with

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her—since the Queen was unmarried he might be one of her suitors. De Quadra, utterly bewildered, earnestly assured the Secretary that nothing was further from the ambassador's mind : he was already provided with a wife, or at least would be shortly.

Cecil, overlooking the Bishop's breach of tact, promised to have another talk with the Queen and communicate her decision the next day. Several days passed while Feria waited in suspense. Then de Quadra, who had been to the Palace on other business, returned with the information, which Feria duly passed on to Philip, that the Queen had refused the request “ but that for my convenience in negotiating with her she would give me an audience as often as I wished, either alone or with some of her Council, as I desired. And so the matter remains.”

And so it might have remained as far as the ambassador was concerned. It was merely adding insult to injury to send him a casual invitation through Cecil after having cheapened him before the whole Council by refusing his petition. But Elizabeth, overcome by curiosity at his stubborn isolation, now took the initiative. She sent her cousin Sir Peter Carew to inquire

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after his health, explaining that since he had not been to see her she thought he must be ill and was worried about him. Her solicitude was somewhat belated, but this was exactly the kind of invitation for which Feria had been waiting ; he was no longer required to apply to her underlings for admission. “ I answered him very cordially, saying I was much obliged to her Majesty for sending him to visit me, and that I had not been to see her as I had heard that she was very busy and I was not sure my visit would be acceptable.” The ice was broken, and from then to the end of his stay he was a frequent if hardly convivial visitor to the Palace.

The closer intercourse thus begun became extremely amicable on both sides. Elizabeth told Feria the latest bits of amusing and malicious Court gossip ; she took him to plays which he understood imperfectly, his English being poor, and which shocked him by their irreverence. She asked him prettily for his advice, listened to it with flattering solemnity and ignored it with a guileless countenance, apparently quite unaware that she was not doing what he wanted. She sent him messages of admiration for his tact and discretion in this

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or that difficult situation, and told him how she envied Philip the services of such an ambassador ; but behind his back she declared that he was “proud like a true Spaniard,” and not to be trusted.

Feria, having decided that she was too scatterbrained to grasp the extent of her danger, gave up trying to frighten her with the bogies of Mary Stuart, France and the Pope, and fell back on the rôle of helpful older friend. His patience became saintly, his indulgence unlimited. Instead of storming at her or threatening her he merely told her how it pained him to see evil men advising her to her own destruction. He had early observed and told Philip that “she was very fond of argument.” Thenceforth he treated her regularly to that exercise, judiciously varying the dialectic with grave flatteries.

The strain soon began to tell on him. As the Christmas season approached his references to the Queen and Council became more and more lavishly sprinkled with “devils,” “knaves,” and “rogues.” In this way he got rid of a good deal of his spleen. But to Elizabeth herself he continued to present only the most angelic countenance. Even when

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she said “false and foolish things about the present occurrences” he merely expostulated with pain instead of storming in rage, as he was often tempted to do.

Elizabeth appeared to enjoy the theological portion of their talks most of all. At times her earnestness made him quite hopeful. She told him for instance that she often regretted that religion had not played a larger part in her upbringing. He at once sent her an assorted collection of books written expressly to deal with such cases as hers. She thanked him, and shortly afterwards declared that she was absorbing their contents with interest and profit.

But the effect on her conduct was not noticeable. The changes in the ritual and in the government of the Church continued. She permitted several of the minor clergy who were known to be married to officiate in her presence, and the celibacy of some of the others was highly doubtful. The Bishop of Winchester was arrested and confined to his house for preaching “a very Catholic sermon in memory of the late Queen.” Before going to Mass on Christmas Sunday she sent orders to the Bishop of Carlisle, who was to conduct the service,

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not to elevate the Host for adoration. He, though the only bishop who would consent to crown her, replied that she was master of his body and life but not of his conscience, and refused to obey. Elizabeth attended Mass but showed her displeasure by walking out before the elevation of the Host. A few days later she found a more amenable bishop and sat out to the end. Nor did she appear to find anything in Feria's sacred volumes to prohibit the sale of Church property and the use of the proceeds for her exchequer.

The Courts entertainments also began to display an increasingly sacrilegious spirit. An Italian gossip, Il Schifanova, wrote to the Castellan of Mantua: "Your Lordship will have heard of the farce performed in the presence of Her Majesty . . . and I not having sufficient intellect to comprehend it, nor yet the mummery performed after supper on the same day, of crows in the habits of cardinals, of asses habited as bishops, and of wolves representing abbots, I will consign it to silence, as also the commencement of the new ritual made in Her Majesty's Chapel, with the English litanies, which omit Saint Mary, all the Saints, the Pope and the Dead."

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The truth presently dawned on Feria that it was as hopeless to keep Elizabeth from flirting with heresy as from flirting with men. She was more attached to her people than to any religious principle, and the people, at least the more articulate of them, were clamouring for change. The rural part of the country might still be loyal to the old religion, but the feelings of London were unmistakable. The temper of the metropolis had grown so ugly that Catholics were being molested in the streets and crowding into the embassies for refuge. To stem Protestantism by argument would soon be as hopeless as shoring up an avalanche with straw. He conveyed this to the King, after one of his friendliest talks with Elizabeth, in the words : “ I think when I left her . . . she was rather kinder than she had been the last time, but it will not be by such talks as these that she or they will be softened.” He would have been even surer of it had he known that after this talk Elizabeth wrote to Philip asking him to recall this “ arrogant ” ambassador and send her another more agreeable one.

The Reformers, however, rated his efforts higher than he did himself, and loved him none the better for it. One of their number, Dr.

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Jewel, later Bishop of Salisbury, paused in the midst of a jubilant letter to Peter Martyr to say : “ The Queen meanwhile, though she openly favours our cause, yet is wonderfully afraid of allowing any innovations ; this is owing partly to her own friends, by whose advice everything is carried out and partly to the influence of Count Feria, a Spaniard and Philip’s (the Protestant leaders rarely troubled to give the Catholic King his full title) ambassador.”

To Feria the above letter would merely have been proof of the madness that inevitably overtook all heretics. He had not only, in his own estimation, failed to influence Elizabeth in any important particular, but those friends of hers were hurrying her, themselves and the country to ruin as fast as they could. He had tried bribery, threats, kindness, and all of them had proved equally unsuccessful. The breach with Rome was now more than a monitory fissure, and it seemed impossible that Philip could induce the Pope much longer to withhold his edict of excommunication. Then the French would arrive with their armies and in an instant the whole of Europe would be ablaze with war. The English themselves appeared

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to have some inkling of this danger, for as December wore on the ambassador began to suspect that they were carrying on some under-handed transaction with the French. Even a general conflagration was scarcely less desirable than a secret peace between Whitehall and the Louvre.

In his heart he blamed Philip for the impending catastrophe. England could always have been saved, might even yet be saved, by vigorous action, but the King had vetoed one after another every strong policy recommended to him. He had declined to send an army and even refused to sanction measures for the suppression of heretics. And outside a few casual moves he had done nothing whatever about Elizabeth's marriage.

The Count himself after four weeks was more convinced than ever of the truth of what he had written on November 21st : " Everything depends on the husband this woman may take." He was now ready to admit that Elizabeth, flighty and irresponsible as she might be in matters of state and religion, had greater power in the country than Mary had ever had. She had attached the lords to her by holding out to several of their leaders a hope

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of marriage, and these were “careful to please her in all things and persuade others to do the same.” In addition she had created new peerages to strengthen her party, and filled twelve bishoprics, left vacant “by that accursed Cardinal” Pole, with “as many ministers of Lucifer instead of being worthily bestowed.” The result was, in the ambassador’s own words, that “the Queen has entire disposal of the Upper Chamber in a way never seen before.” Many others beside Feria testified to the common people’s adoration of her. A correspondent in London wrote to the Venetian ambassador in Brussels early in December: “The Queen, by frequently showing herself in public, giving audience to all who ask for it, and using every mark of graciousness towards everyone, daily gains favour and affection from all her people.”

Such power in the hands of a capricious young woman was as irrational as gunpowder in the hands of a child, and as dangerous, but the ambassador was not the man to quarrel with facts. If Elizabeth married a subject, a Protestant, a foreigner, even a Frenchman, the country would probably give her consort a noisy welcome. Though she might lose her throne for any one of a dozen reasons, marriage

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was not one of them, as far as her own subjects were concerned.

On his arrival at this conclusion Feria notified Philip that "the most discreet people fear she will marry for caprice, and as the good or evil of the business all turns on this, I do nothing but think how I can get a word in about it. . . ."

He contrived at one time or another to have a great many words with the Queen on the subject, and was pardonably annoyed with her when she persisted in treating it as a joke. He would expound to her at length the advantages of a husband who could strengthen her position abroad through his family connections and at home through the approval of her Catholic subjects. She would respond, with an air of mock-serious deference, that she was just about to take his advice, that in fact she had practically made up her mind to marry So-and-so, mentioning some absurd nonentity whom Feria would at once tear to shreds. After listening for a while to his eloquence and irony she would profess herself convinced, only to acknowledge, a few minutes or a few days later, an interest in some equally impossible fellow.

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The royal Palaces were beginning to resemble Bassanio's description of Portia's mansion :

“ For the four winds blow in from every coast
Renowned suitors ; and her sunny locks
Hang on her temples like a golden fleece ; . . .
And many Jasons come in quest of her.”

Elizabeth's marriage had become the great European lottery. Wifeless kings and emperors were hopefully offering themselves, and the married ones (a few of whom reflected in passing that the marriage tie was not necessarily indissoluble) were proposing sons, brothers, nephews and cousins, after examining their treasury balances to see how they would bear the strain of a matrimonial embassy.

And against these boatloads of wooers Feria had nothing to offer but a poverty-stricken archduke and a prince out of a job. He had done his best for Ferdinand, though without conviction, but Elizabeth had pointed out that his head was too big and that a husband who was always at his prayers was of little use to her. As for Philibert of Savoy, a forlorn hanger-on at Philip's court, the ambassador was not sure whether Elizabeth would be more amused

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or insulted at the serious mention of his name. Philip had suggested no one else, nor had he said a word about his own intentions in answer to the trenchant hint in Feria's first despatch.

On December 14th, five weeks after his arrival in England, Feria composed his second long report on the results of his mission to date. It was a completely pessimistic document. Religion was on the verge of ruin, England as insistent on Calais as ever, Philip's influence at vanishing point—in sum : “these people are going on in a way that must end in their coming to grief.” The ambassador was as always fertile in expedients for meeting the numerous minor problems. But for the major ones he now offered only one solution : if the King wanted to retain the allegiance of England and restore it to the Catholic faith, if he desired to bring peace to Europe and return home to Spain, he must take immediate steps to marry Elizabeth himself.

CHAPTER VI

VARIOUS COURT CARDS

ADVISING any man whom he ought to marry is a delicate matter ; when the man is also a king the need for delicacy is multiplied indefinitely. And Philip was neither an ordinary king nor an ordinary man. The future of the world hung on his choice—it no more occurred to Feria than to Philip to separate the King's marriage from the destiny of the human race. Like every Spanish patrician the ambassador dreamed of a day when the blood of Ferdinand and Isabella should flow in the veins of all kings, and Europe become a vast patriarchy looking to the Escorial for wisdom and guidance. The ambassador also knew the man with whom he had to deal : the unresting conscience which demanded that every act be selfless, the austere piety which the needs of the flesh could so easily terrify, the lonely repressions, the hesitating obstinacy. . . . It was often most difficult to make Philip do just what he most wanted to do. Feria realised that his utmost subtlety

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would be required to win his master over to the idea of the marriage.

He led up to his climax with deepest care. By careful selection of detail he gave Philip the picture of England rapidly declining from its loyalty to Spain : "They were all very glad to be free of your Majesty," he said in summary, "as if you had done harm instead of very much good, and, although in all my letters to your Majesty I have said how small a party you have here I am never satisfied that I have said enough to describe things as they really are." With an artist's instinct he recognised that no amount of detail would so stir the King's imagination as a confession of his inability to paint the situation as black as it really was. He portrayed Elizabeth growing equally in caprice and in power, more and more likely to marry to suit herself and her subjects rather than accept an empty-handed dependent of Spain. And so he led to the inescapable inference that Philip must either marry Elizabeth or face the loss of England.

"We must begin by getting her into talk about your Majesty. . . ." He was far too subtle to be dogmatic. It was much better to let the King think that his own intelligence had

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deduced the moral from the facts presented to him ; also, for an ambassador who valued his career, more prudent. “ No one understands better than your Majesty the affairs of this country, and indeed all others, and I do not see, therefore, how anybody can advise your Majesty in this better than you can advise yourself.” The ambassador permitted himself only the most deferential reminder of the advantages that might be expected from the marriage outside of England as well as inside. “ When your Majesty married the late Queen the French felt it very keenly, as they will if you marry this one, and particularly as she is more likely to have children on account of her age and temperament, in both of which respects she is much better than the Queen now in heaven, although in every other she compares most unfavourably with her.”

He did not repeat his opinion of the previous month that if she decided to marry out of the country she would at once fix her eyes on Philip, but he intimated clearly that he thought he could direct her inclinations, if they were not already favourable, through her vanity. The Council, he admitted, would be difficult. “ At present I see no disposition to enter into

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the discussion of any proposal on your Majesty's behalf, either on her part or that of the Council"—but he added that he was hopeful of managing her in a personal interview as long as the ministers were kept in ignorance of his design. It would perhaps be better if the Council was opposed to the marriage, for a proposal from Philip would drive a wedge between them and the Queen, and would undoubtedly result in splitting them up into harmless factions. All he asked was that the King should send orders to go ahead, and leave the details to him.

But before he concluded with the subject the ambassador had something else that he wanted to convey, something so delicate that he wove it into his text impalpably, almost without words. He had spent his life in the company of kings, and he was too old and too wise to treat them as mere machines of policy. Philip might prefer to think of himself in this way, but Feria knew his capacity for self-deception. He knew also that Elizabeth would never entertain a proposal which ignored the fact that she was desirable in herself, apart from the office she held.

With the deepest guile Feria invoked old



ELIZABETH

The younger of the two National Portrait Gallery likenesses

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images and desires in his reader's brain. Under a cloak of disparagement he painted a picture of Elizabeth's youth and physical charms that was more effective than the rhapsodies of less restrained observers. When he mentioned the probability of Elizabeth having children, he threw in the word "temperament" where the single fact of "age" would have sufficed. He had Philip far more than Elizabeth in mind when he wrote, "We must tell her that one of the reasons the Queen, now in Heaven, disliked her was her fear that if she died your Majesty would marry her (Elizabeth)." He put the sentence into cipher, not to keep it from Elizabeth's eyes, but to make it stand out in Philip's. She was unlikely ever to see it, and in itself it was no more compromising than other parts of the letter. But it was desirable that the King should remember Mary's jealousy and its associations . . . and that Mary was now dead and could no longer interfere.

The letter was sealed and despatched with special precautions to guard its secrecy. In view of the urgency of its contents the ambassador had reason to expect a speedy answer. If Philip authorised him to make a proposal

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there was a great deal of ground to be prepared in the short time available before the reply could come from Brussels. He had at least seven factors to reckon with, seven conflicting sets of prejudices, hopes, fears and vanities. There were the two principals, Elizabeth and Philip, whose inclinations he had not yet sounded ; public opinion, or rather the opinion of the ruling caste, in England, which was fiercely opposed to a foreign marriage ; Philip's councillors, who were dissatisfied with the fruits of his previous English experiment ; the Holy Roman Emperor, who would be aggrieved because he considered that Philip had as good as promised him Elizabeth for one of his sons ; France, who would stop at nothing to prevent a closer alliance between England and her ancient enemy ; and the Pope, who would not lightly consent to a Catholic sovereign's union with a woman who was at once a heretic and a sister-in-law.

Only the first three of these factors fell within Feria's province ; the rest must be looked after in Brussels. He believed that the King would be the most difficult of the three, as he was the most important, but nothing more could be accomplished in that direction until

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the reply came ; the surest way to put Philip's back up was to press him. He turned to see what could be done with Elizabeth and the Council.

His approach to both was indirect. The ministers had to be kept in the dark until he had talked Elizabeth over ; he had no intention of allowing them to interfere with his plans before they were fully matured. The best line that occurred to him was to take their minds off their favourite project of the Queen's marriage to a subject until his own scheme had come to fruition. "What can be done with the Council individually," he told Philip, "but not as a body is to dissuade them from a marriage with an Englishman, and I am moving in this way as cleverly as I can, but very cautiously and slowly, seeing how little I can mix with these people." Although as a body they were more or less pledged to oppose foreign husbands, in practice they could always be split into jealous factions when any particular Englishman approached too near the seat of power. He had little doubt of his ability to manage them after he had Philip's consent to the marriage ; they would scarcely dare oppose the King openly, once there was a chance that the Queen might

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accept him, for fear of his ill-will if he returned to share the throne in spite of their opposition.

What worried him far more was the competition that had arisen during the past month. Every day now brought its fresh suitor, either in person or in proxy, and Elizabeth welcomed them all. Middle-aged and young, sober and sprightly, courtly brunets from Italy and uncouth blonds from Scandinavia, she mixed them indiscriminately with her own jealous aristocracy, and by smiles and half-promises encouraged the arrival of still more. Though at one time or another the matrimonial hope of nearly every known principality was represented at her Court, there were never too many to please her. Wherever she happened to be, in Hampton Court, Whitehall, Greenwich or one of her country residences, she was pursued by gentlemen eager to lay their hearts at her feet and their possessions at her service ; most of them possessed very little save a sword and their manly charms. They showered flatteries on her, gifts on her attendants and black looks on one another ; the Court resounded with compliments and curses in many tongues. Several times their quarrels became so furious that Elizabeth had to intervene to prevent

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bloodshed in her very presence. The only important power in Europe that had no particular suitor of its own was the Church, and she made it clear at a later date that she had not overlooked this omission by confessing to de Quadra's successor at the Spanish embassy that the one man she would particularly have liked to marry was the Pope.

Betting on the winner became a popular sport. The current odds, freely published by the bookmakers in the City, shifted as rapidly as the island breezes. The gossip of the Court, fresh news from abroad, a ship's cargo of presents from a particularly rich suitor, a markedly cordial smile or a caustic remark from Elizabeth, would at once depose one reigning favourite and install another in his place.

Suitors were no new experience to Elizabeth, though hitherto they had appeared in file rather than in swarm. When she was less than three years old that pair of royal buffoons, her father and Francis I, had haggled over her engagement to the French king's third son, the baby Duke of Angoulême, but the bargain fell through because Henry asked more than Francis thought she was worth. When she was eighteen the rebel Duke of Northumber-

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land, Lord Robert Dudley's father, had, while looking about for Continental alliances, tried to pass her off on the eleven-year-old Duke of Florence, because "it were an easy matter to be concluded without excessive dot." At twenty-two Edward Courtenay, the heir of the White Rose, had planned to carry her off during the Wyatt rebellion. He had been sent into exile, whence he wrote grandly rhetorical letters reminding her that he was dying of hopeless love of her. He did actually die, probably of Spanish poison, though the Italian doctors who conducted the post-mortem obligingly certified malaria. Mary, alarmed and angered by the uprising, had then tried to marry her to Don Carlos in order to get her out of the country; only a sudden shift in Philip's plans for his son saved her from the appalling union with the ten-year-old lunatic.

She had an even narrower escape from becoming the wife of Philibert, Duke of Savoy. This young man had been expelled from his dominions and was drifting round Europe as a protégé of Spain. Charles V, wondering what to do with him, hit on the idea of marrying him to Elizabeth and, in the event of Philip and Mary having no children, supporting the

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pair of them for the succession as a set-off to the future pretensions of France and Mary Stuart. There were difficulties in the way, however ; the match could only be arranged if Mary proclaimed her sister's legitimacy, and this she could not do without admitting the validity of her parents' divorce. Before a formula could be devised the Emperor had withdrawn from active to monastic life, but Philip took up the idea and Mary, partly out of a desire to please him and partly to put her sister safely out of the way, was brought to agree to it.

Elizabeth pleaded her youth and her preference for virginity. She saw clearly, apart from whatever private aversion she might have to marriage in general, that she would have little hope of coming to the throne as the wife of a disinherited prince, without money, power or standing. But neither her prayers nor her protests were able to divert Mary once she had made up her mind. Philibert was instructed to go to England, Elizabeth released and brought to Court to meet him. In royal circles the first presentation of a young couple to each other was by custom the preliminary to their wedding. Philibert set forth, but the Channel

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was unusually rough. He became very seasick, and his promised bride waited two weeks at Hampton Court while her lover lay miserably recovering at Dover.

Fate again whirled the political kaleidoscope during that fortnight and at the end of it matters were less acute. Mary's subjects had made it plain that they would be considerably annoyed if the heir, imitating the Queen, married a foreigner and thereby brought further expensive obligations on the country. The temper of the Protestants was distinctly ugly, and even the Catholics were not too well pleased at an alliance which could bring in nothing of value. Mary and Philip stopped to think it over, and were still doing so when the French war broke out.

The loss of Calais pushed Philibert into the background, and by the time Philip was ready to give him further attention Mary was on her deathbed. From that time onward Philibert's chances declined so swiftly that after the beginning of Elizabeth's reign he was no longer quoted even by the bookmakers.

After her accession Elizabeth's suitors fell into two fairly equal classes, English and foreign. Because of their geographical advan-

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tage the former were naturally in evidence first. In his letter of December 14th, Feria transmitted a long though by no means exhaustive catalogue of them. The earliest was the young Duke of Norfolk, aged twenty-two, the foremost and richest peer in the country, who had lost his wife the previous year and promptly "sent to Rome to have a dispensation to marry one of his kinswomen in the third degree, and [lacking, perhaps, Feria's connections in Rome] did not obtain it, which will have been his good fortune should this befall him . . ." It did not befall him and he presently consoled himself with his second heiress, who soon died. The last proposal of his life he made to Mary Queen of Scots, and lost his head in consequence.

Various other noblemen were picked up and dropped, and then Norfolk's elderly relative, the Earl of Arundel, turned up from Flanders and for a time outdistanced the pack.

Arundel's suit was already several years old. He had been Elizabeth's gaoler during her imprisonment in the Tower and had been so smitten with her youthful pathos that he withdrew the proposal he had previously made to Mary on behalf of his son and offered

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to marry her himself, an offer which the Queen had summarily refused. At the time of Elizabeth's accession the Earl was head of the English delegation at Cercamps, but hurried back to England at once to renew his offer. His fellow passenger on the voyage home was Feria's aide, the Bishop of Aquila. The crossing was as bad as the unfortunate Philibert's "He (the Bishop) suffered greatly at sea, but—I believe," wrote Feria whimsically, "the tears of the Earl of Arundel floated them into port, for he says the Earl cried like a child." Arundel's powers of recuperation proved superior to Philibert's apparently, for only a few days after his arrival in London Feria was writing that he "saw the Earl at the Palace, very smart and clean, and they say he carries his thoughts very high."

A fortnight later the same authority reported that "the Earl of Arundel has been going about in high glee for some time and is very smart. He has given jewels worth 2000 crowns to the women who surround the Queen, and his son-in-law, Lord Lumley, has been very confidential with her. I was rather disturbed at this for a time, as an Italian merchant from whom he has borrowed large sums of money

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[lent no doubt on his expectations], told others here that he was to marry the Queen, but I did not lose hope, *as the Earl is a flighty man of small ability.*"

It was obvious that the ambassador was worried. "Flighty" was his severest epithet and meant that the person to whom it was applied was politically and theologically unsound; yet Arundel's hopes of sharing the throne were apparently so high that the discreet Feria thought it best to veil his opinion of the man in cipher. He tried to induce Elizabeth to deny the rumour, but she laughed and insisted on discussing Arundel's suit seriously. His mind was not set at rest until she refused the Earl the office of Treasurer, on which he had set his heart, and gave it to the aged Marquess of Winchester, with the observation that he was exactly the man she would have chosen as a husband had he been a bachelor and perhaps half a century younger.

Arundel himself did not lose hope, even after everyone else agreed that he had been dropped. He hung about the palace, quarrelling with his rivals and other people who disagreed with him. Bishop de Quadra describes an interesting scene in which he took part a little

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later. A proposed raid on the French embassy was being discussed before the Queen in Council, the Earl and the Lord Admiral taking opposite sides. Their differences grew so acute that they "not only came to rough words, but fell to fisticuffs and pulling each other's beards. The Queen passed it over and pretended not to have seen it, calling to them to play before her [what they were to play is not stated: if music, the Queen's own preference was for the virginals] so that they might be obliged to talk together and to make revel." This was done, but only, added the Bishop disapprovingly, "at a great sacrifice of the Queen's dignity."

More violent even than his quarrels with his political enemies was Arundel's fury against his successor. This was Sir William Pickering, a dashing blade of forty-three, who at Mary's death was lying ill in Holland, where he had been carrying out a partly military, partly diplomatic mission. His was a colourful past. At the age of twenty-seven he and his wild young friend, the poet Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, were sent to prison for eating flesh during Lent and "breaking the windows of the houses with stones shot from cross-bows"

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during their nocturnal prowls through London.

On the rumour of Pickering's return "the Earl of Arundel . . . was said to have sold his lands and was ready to flee out of the realm with the money, because he could not abide in the realm if the Queen should marry Mr. Pickering, for they were enemies." Arundel apparently had good grounds for alarm. That indefatigable gossip, Il Schifanova, wrote to the Mantuan ambassador in Brussels, ". . . it is still said by the vulgar that one Master Pincruin will be her husband." The letter is dated February 6th, 1559, but the "still" shows that the gossip had been going on for some time.

Pickering recovered and sailed for England. He was preceded by the reputation of being tall and handsome "and very successful with women, for he is said to have enjoyed the intimacy of many and great ones." Elizabeth was visibly impressed and invited him to be her guest at Greenwich Palace. The bookmakers offered odds of one to four that he would be king. Naturally there were jealousies and threats of duels, but Pickering's knack with a sword was so widely feared that none of the

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challenges ever materialised, not even the frantic Arundel's. After his retirement Feria heard from his successor that "the other day when Pickering was going into the chapel, which is inside the Queen's apartments, the Earl of Arundel came in the door and told him he knew very well that that was a place for lords, and that he must go to the presence chamber. The other answered that he knew that, and he also knew that Arundel was an impudent, discourteous knave, which the Earl heard and went out without answering a word, leaving the other to enter. Pickering tells it in public and refrains from challenging him as he holds him of small account, but it is very right that he should refrain, as the other is very weak."

Both rivals soon fell into oblivion, but Pickering at least had no illusions about his chances. He saved his money for his own lordly entertainments, at which he "always dined apart with music playing," instead of wasting it in a futile courtship, and frankly told the Emperor's ambassador, who was acting on behalf of another suitor, that "the Queen would laugh at him and the rest of them, as she meant to die an old maid."

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A few dejected statesmen muttered similar warnings in tones of less cheerful resignation, but the gallants of the Continent, deaf to the greybeards' pessimism, continued to collect their plumed and jewelled escorts and turn up in the English estuaries under gaudy red and orange sails. Now and then even the most devoted of Elizabeth's subjects would grumble, with unmistakable sincerity, that Europe was too much with them. She would then soothe their apprehensions by saying that never, never would she marry a foreigner ; but she had a way of saying it that left the foreigners as hopeful as before. Even the alert Feria by no means accepted these pronouncements as gospel, and told the King more than once that they were not to be taken seriously.

Comparatively few of the foreign suitors came in person ; the rest, for fear of compromising their dignity by a possible refusal, preferred to propose at a distance until they received some specific encouragement. The most unyielding of these sticklers was the Holy Roman Emperor. He had no ambition to marry Elizabeth himself but he had two sons for whose future he displayed a strong paternal concern. He had begun with Ferdinand, the

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elder and more pious, but he still had the better-looking and more athletic Charles in reserve. His Apostolic Majesty was poor but proud : he declined to let his sons visit England without the assurance that they would be spared the uncertainty and scramble of less blue-blooded wooers. He was willing, however, to submit oil portraits of either or both. Elizabeth demurred. No woman, she said, could be expected to marry a man she had not first seen ; portrait-painters, particularly of royalty, were notoriously given to flattery. Still the Emperor refused to expose his offspring to a possible snub. In the first week of Elizabeth's reign Ferdinand's chances seemed among the best ; by the sixth they were nil ; in the spring they were to blossom once more. Things went on in this way for ten years or so, while one Imperial ambassador after another travelled the long road between London and Vienna.

Another suitor who hesitated to come in person, but otherwise gave unmistakable evidence of his passion, was the King of Denmark. "The Danish ambassador to the Queen of England," wrote Paolo Tiepolo, Michiel Surian's successor in Brussels, "to demonstrate his King's love for Queen Elizabeth

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wore upon his gown a crimson velvet heart pierced with an arrow." When the French and English began to quarrel over Scotland, the same prince, as a sign of his devotion, returned the Order of St. Michael to the King of France because he would not wear a decoration given him by his lady's enemies.

A more active but less amiable suitor was the King of Denmark's brother, Adolphus, Duke of Holstein. He elected to come in person, which profoundly upset Feria, who had just put his own far more exciting matrimonial iron into the fire. Adolphus was handsome, which would please Elizabeth ; a Protestant, which would please the ministerial party ; and rich, which would please everybody. The Spaniard could not dispute the existence of the Duke's money or his family connections, so he set about to deny his other virtues. "I am persuading them," he told Philip, "that he is a very good Catholic and not so comely a gentleman as they make him out to be, as I do not think he would suit us."

His depreciation of the new suitor failed to chill Elizabeth's curiosity. To his dismay she encouraged Adolphus to come and made so great a fuss over him that the ambassador

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thought of starting international complications to draw the Duke out of the country. He alarmed himself unnecessarily. Adolphus came, made a stir and spent a great deal of money in entertainment, but a year later de Quadra was writing, “the Duke is not very well satisfied with the Queen about the marriage and even respecting other affairs, although he tried to hide it”; five years later Adolphus retired discouraged, one of the least persistent amongst the train of suitors.

Adolphus had several rivals from his own Scandinavia, of whom the chief was Eric, son of Gustavus Vasa, King of Sweden. Gustavus had already, in Mary’s lifetime, proposed for his son, after the unusual courtesy of first trying to learn Elizabeth’s inclinations. She had returned her customary prudent answer that she would consider no proposal that did not come through her sister in the first place, and did not want to marry at all in the second, which her current guardian and keeper put down to mere “maidenly shamefacedness.”

Eric’s suit was deferred for a while on other grounds, but was renewed with vigour after Mary’s death. Gustavus was fabulously rich, and showered presents of tapestries, ermines

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and other valuable gifts upon his prospective daughter-in-law. In return Elizabeth sent him the jewelled badge of the Garter. Eric thereupon decided to apply in person. She was delighted, as he was reported to be one of the best-looking men in Europe, but somewhat put out when the London shopkeepers, taking her gratification for consent, prematurely put on sale her portrait united with Eric's. The entire edition of the offending prints was ordered to be confiscated and destroyed.

While Eric was getting ready to go his younger brother, the Duke of Finland, was sent over from Stockholm to obtain an affirmative answer in advance. Neither he nor the Swedish ambassador, however, could get Elizabeth to commit herself. "They tell me," reported the ubiquitous Feria, "that the Swedish ambassador has again pressed the matter of the marriage and told the Queen that the son of the King his master was still of the same mind, and asked for a reply to the letter he brought last year." Elizabeth, thus cornered, wriggled out in her typical way with the quibble that "the letter was written when she was Madame Elizabeth, and now that she was Queen of England he must write to her as

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Queen, and she would give an answer. She did not know whether his master would leave his kingdom to marry her, but she would not leave hers to be monarch of the world, and at present she would not reply yes or no."

Eric was still delayed by one thing and another. When he finally started bad weather turned him back. He despatched a message to assure Elizabeth that he would persist, just as he would persist against her foes if she married him. A son of the Vikings was not the man to give up because of stormy seas. All he asked was that she should return his love. "No one," argued this great lover earnestly, "is so stupid as to continue to love without being loved."

For some reason Elizabeth found the sentiment comic. She treated the Swedes generally as if they were there simply for her amusement, which they quite properly resented. "The Swedish ambassadors," wrote de Quadra, thoroughly pleased with the situation, "are leaving much aggrieved and offended, as I believe it was brought to their notice that they were being made fun of in the Palace, and by the Queen more than anybody. I do not think it matters much whether they depart pleased or displeased."

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Meantime, the Duke of Finland decided that he had sufficiently done his duty by his elder brother, and proposed on his own behalf. He quickly regretted it. Elizabeth made it clear that she disliked his person and could not bear his manners. He tried to change her opinion of him by “scattering large sums of money and showing himself off to the Queen,” but with unsatisfactory results—“The son of the King of Sweden went to-day to visit the Queen and being tired of waiting in an ante-chamber, went away to his house without saying a word to anybody.” The Court took its cue from the Queen and made him the butt of the kind of humour fairly described by the adjective Elizabethan. The angry young man looked round wildly for somebody to take his revenge on and selected the Imperial ambassador, who was reported to have said that the Duke’s father was “only a clown who had stolen his kingdom from the Prince of Denmark.” The Queen herself had to step in and keep them apart “to avoid their slashing each other in her presence.” The Duke left in a huff. His more presentable brother continued to wait for fairer winds and promises, but his chances vanished in the explosion of Elizabeth’s fury

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when she heard the next year that he had been making advances on the sly to the newly widowed Mary Stuart.

Feria's position was somewhat ambiguous. Until he heard from the King he had to content himself with merely negative measures. Later, with the most glittering matrimonial prize in Christendom to offer, he would have something definite to interpose between Elizabeth and her legion of suitors, but in the meantime all he could do was to prevent her from involving herself definitely with any one of them. There would be a very awkward knot to untangle if Philip brought himself to propose only to discover that Elizabeth was already engaged. Should the Spanish alliance appeal to her she would have to break off the engagement, and wars had been fought for less.

He prepared a set of tactics which he described to Philip with modest pride. In the course of conversation with Elizabeth he would, he explained, encourage her to talk about her other suitors. Then, as their names came up he would "pick them to pieces, one by one, which will not require much rhetoric for there is not a man amongst them worth anything, including the married ones and all." He was

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able to offer two illustrations of this method in the scientific disparagement he had already practised on Arundel and Duke Adolphus.

But while running down Philip's rivals, he was able to lead her thoughts, he hoped imperceptibly, to Philip himself. For this double purpose he constantly invoked the image of Mary, against whom Elizabeth was "as much set . . . as she was previous to her death."

If she showed any inclination to a man of inferior rank, one of her own subjects or an unpedigreed Teuton, he would "run down the idea of her marrying an Englishman, and thus . . . hold herself cheaper than her sister, who would never marry a subject," or tell her "how badly it would look for her to marry one of these men while there were great Princes whom she might marry." He continually stressed the disappointment he would feel if, after the high opinion he had formed of her, she fell below Mary's standard and allowed herself to be attracted by anything but the highest. For good measure he would then throw in a reminder "of the Queen Dauphine (Mary Stuart) and the need for her (Elizabeth) being allied with your Majesty, or

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with someone belonging to you and so on," and follow it with a hint that unless she acted quickly she might lose Philip to a certain fair lady of the French royal house.

Feria did not overlook the fact that, however excellent his strategy in England, its results might be nullified by a refusal from Philip. Like a good general, therefore, he held open a line of retreat, and never allowed Elizabeth entirely to forget his alternative candidate, the Archduke Ferdinand. If Elizabeth could be brought to interest herself in the Austrian, so much the better. She would then be quite stunned when the greater opportunity was offered her. If, on the other hand, Philip declined to marry her, nothing would have been lost. She would be unruffled by his rejection since she would never know about it, and the time would not have been wasted if headway had been made towards another suitable marriage for her. The ambassador, with his usual foresight, inserted a request for instructions on this point in the same letter of December 14th : " If she inclines to your Majesty it will be necessary for you to send me orders whether I am to carry it [Philip's proposal] any further or throw cold water on it and set up the

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Archduke Ferdinand, because I do not see what other person we can propose to whom she would agree."

A fortnight elapsed, and still no reply. It would have taken the letter of the 14th approximately five days to reach Brussels. Another five days might be allowed for the answer. This left only five more, a very short time for the tremendous decision which the King was called upon to make. Normally the ambassador would have allowed for this and for the ordeal through which he knew the King must be passing, but these times were not normal. During that fortnight the enemies of the Church had at last dared to come out into the open, and its fabric was plainly showing the marks of their assaults. Howard was preparing to go to the Continent with the instructions for the peace on which so much depended, and Feria had neither been able to find out what England's demands would be, nor whether there was hope of a peace being arrived at; in addition it was now beyond dispute that something queer was going on between Paris and London, which could not but threaten danger to Spain. More and more suitors were coming—already a dozen eligible princes and

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dukes, and many more ineligible ones, were flinging kingdoms, swords, presents and their various attractive selves at the feet of a flirtatious young woman, and the ambassador could conceive of no other outcome than that she would accept one of them sooner or later. Her temperament and the law of averages made it only too likely that the choice would be an unsatisfactory one.

Moreover, though he dared not say so, Feria knew that the King had no reason for hesitation. It was not as if the idea of the marriage was new. Every courtier and diplomat in Europe was quite aware that Philip's mind was never far off Elizabeth, if not before Mary's death, then certainly after. Michiel Surian had written from Brussels ten days after Elizabeth's accession, "As to what the Count de Feria is negotiating with regard to the marriage of Miladi Elizabeth, I am unable to write anything authentic, but the whole Court is full of the King's intention to have her for himself, as written by me lately."

The King had, therefore, no excuse for pleading that the ambassador's suggestion had taken him unawares, nor could he fairly assert, after a close perusal of the letter of December

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14th, that the recommendation had been made before every other alternative had been considered and rejected.

The delay imposed another handicap, a very serious one, on the ambassador's plans. He could not stop gossip, but he had taken every precaution to prevent the English from knowing that a proposal from Philip was definitely on the cards. If they found out they would have all the advantage of preparation and he would have lost all the advantage of surprise. Instead of being able to confront the Queen with a firm offer, to take or leave at her risk, he would find her already armed with stipulations and perhaps already half dissuaded by the anti-Spanish party in the Council. He intended that she should be so moved by the honour conferred upon her, so relieved by the prospect of security from her enemies for all time to come, that there would be little doubt of her acceptance without impossible qualifications or conditions. If the story leaked out the opposite danger would arise, that her vanity, injured by Philip's refusal, would make her more difficult than ever.

The ambassador was therefore considerably upset when, two days after Christmas, Sir Peter

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Carew came to pay him a visit, ostensibly to inquire after his health. Carew lingered to discuss various matters connected with religion and the French treaty, but Feria suspected that these topics were merely blinds and stiffly declined to pursue them "any further until I had your Majesty's instructions." Carew, seeing that the Spaniard refused to be drawn, finally made several remarks "about the obligation under which the English are to your Majesty" and so, having established as he thought a sympathetic atmosphere, suddenly said "he wished to God that your Majesty had married the new Queen and had children by her."

Feria was taken aback. Carew was evidently trying to pump him, but at whose instigation and for what purpose he could not tell, though he would have given a good deal to find out. The Spaniard gave him small satisfaction. Pretending to misunderstand Carew's plain hint he "did not answer a word about the marriage," but innocently "pointed out the good offices of your Majesty to the Queen and country."

Probably a look of disappointment and boredom passed over Carew's face at this trite evasion, for the ambassador quickly added a morsel of information which he was certain

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would make the Englishman and his unknown principal prick up their ears—"I told him the news about the money coming from the Indies, without diminishing the amount at all, so that he might tell the Queen, as I thought she would be glad to hear your Majesty is so prosperous and well off." The news of Philip's improved finances, he added significantly, had "already made a great noise in France." From the look on his visitor's face as he left, Feria was hopeful that the news would also improve the atmosphere for Philip in England.

Despite the little victory which the galleons from the Indies had brought him, the ambassador was distinctly uneasy at the suggestion Carew had thrown out. It might of course have been a mere shot in the dark, but it was also possible that some of the inner circle at court suspected something, and that Philip had already lost the tactical advantage of surprise. In that event circumstances might so have altered by the time he made his proposal that instead of becoming the master he might easily become the butt of Europe.

Cracks and blisters began to appear on the polished surface of Feria's habitual deference to his King. His promptings became more and

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more imperative, and at length took on the accents of command. He warned Philip that while he dallied one of the other suitors (he carefully enumerated the recent additions to the list) would snatch her off from under his nose. The ambassador was uncertain what effect jealousy would have on his master, since Philip was notably deficient in that quality, but he was in a frame of mind to try anything that might move the King to action. In every letter he emphasised more strongly the gathering momentum of England's descent toward the abyss. At the end of the fortnight he was writing, "Your Majesty *must* get the affair in your grasp. We *must* begin at once to see that the King of France does not get in or spoil the crop that your Majesty has sown." The word "*must*" had little precedent in the language of a diplomat to his sovereign, even in that of the candid Feria to Philip. Only desperation could have instigated its use.

This letter, composed of scraps written in obvious haste, was sent off on December 29th. The same day Feria somehow snatched an hour from his occupations, postponed several appointments, left his secretaries to draft his despatches, and went off to attend his own wedding.

CHAPTER VII

THE KING'S PROPOSAL

FERIA'S letter of the 14th threw the King into an agony of indecision. It could not have come at a worse time. On one hand he had to plan the multitudinous details of the new Peace Conference—consult his own delegates, argue with the English, and see what could be done to bribe the French. On the other if the negotiations broke down he had to be ready on the instant for another war, which meant that he had to scrape together every ducat, every ship, every man he could lay his hands on. Simultaneously his generals were pestering him with plans for the fortifications of Metz, Rome was importuning him for help in the suppression of heresy, his agents in Holland were bursting with proofs of Dutch sedition.

The marriage itself did not strike him unfavourably ; only the time was unpropitious. There were so many things to think about, so many people to be consulted. In six months, perhaps, he could have weighed everything

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nicely. But the remorseless Feria had insisted on an immediate decision—his letter made it cruelly evident that England was surely lost unless this thing was done and done quickly.

The King did his best. He hurried to ask his councillors, his relatives, the Papal nuncio in Brussels, the Spanish ambassador in Rome. With desperate intensity he demanded of his conscience whether he was being drawn to this marriage by earthly desire or the service of his faith and his realm. It was so hard to be sure ; his Council was as divided as his own mind, and God's will so difficult to ascertain.

At length, on January 10th, he was ready to answer. The interval, long as it had seemed to Feria, was nevertheless a tribute to the forcible impression his letter of December 14th had made on his master, for only three weeks separated its arrival in Brussels from the departure of Philip's momentous reply.

The letter began with compliments to Feria for dissuading the Queen from marrying a subject, and urged him to continue his efforts. As for himself, the King was not quite sure how he felt. “ If they should broach the subject to you, you should treat it in such a way as neither to accept nor reject the business al-



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together. It is a matter of such grave importance that it was necessary for me to take counsel and maturely consider it in all its bearings before I sent you my decision."

He then went on to point out that "many great obstacles present themselves," both moral and practical. "It is difficult for me to reconcile my conscience to it, as I am obliged to reside in my other dominions and consequently could not be much in England, which apparently is what they fear, and also because the Queen has not been sound on religion, and it would not look well for me to marry her unless she were a Catholic. Besides this such a marriage would appear like entering upon a perpetual war with France, seeing the claims that the Queen of Scots has to the English crown. The urgent need for my presence in Spain, which is greater than I can say here, by reason of the costly entertainment necessary to the people there, together with the fact that my treasury is so utterly exhausted as to be unable to meet the most necessary ordinary expenditure, much less new and onerous charges . . ."

The dictation paused uncertainly. The secretary, having experience of his master's

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involved sentences, knew that more was coming and withheld his full stop. Philip drew a long breath and resumed. What he had already said meant, if words mean anything, that he could not possibly marry Elizabeth, at least at present. He plunged into another verbal thicket from which he emerged with definite instructions to Feria to make a firm proposal for her hand with all reasonable despatch.

“ Bearing in mind these and many other difficulties no less grave, which I need not set forth, I nevertheless cannot lose sight of the enormous importance of such a match to Christianity and the preservation of religion which has been restored in England by the help of God. Seeing also the importance that the country should not fall back into its former errors, which would cause to our own neighbouring dominions serious dangers and difficulties, I have decided to place on one side all other considerations which might be urged against it and am resolved to render this service to God, and offer to marry the Queen of England, and will use every possible effort to carry this through if it can be done on the conditions that will be explained to you.”

The “first and most important” condition

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was that Elizabeth should "profess the same religion as I do, which is the same that I shall ever hold." (One can see the secretary's involuntary nod of approval at this pious declaration.) Feria himself was to be the judge of her sincerity. Next, it was essential that she should obtain "secret absolution from the Pope and the necessary dispensation." In this way only, explained Philip, will she prove herself a Catholic, and "make evident and manifest that I am serving the Lord in marrying her and that she has been converted by my act." As an afterthought he added that the stipulation in the marriage treaty with Mary, whereby his Netherland dominions were to pass to the issue of that marriage, should not be renewed, as it would be prejudicial to his son Carlos.

Even after having made up his mind on the principal matter, the King was torn between conflicting subsidiary considerations. Elizabeth might not, after all, accept him with instant eagerness. Perhaps it would be better not to dampen her enthusiasm at the beginning with his conditions, since conditions always bred argument. He therefore instructed Feria to suppress them until he saw "how the Queen

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is disposed towards the matter." His first impulse was to approach the Queen secretly, as Feria had advised, and in speech, not in writing. It then occurred to him that secrecy would deprive him of that pressure of English opinion on which he counted to aid his suit, and he told Feria that secrecy was not of first importance as his dignity could not be compromised by a woman's refusal of him. In any event he was not the man to sacrifice a cause to false pride. In the last resort he could, of course, always let it be known that it was she rather than he who had made the first advances.

On one point, however, he was quite definite. The proposal must be made, he sternly informed Feria, on the loftiest and most businesslike basis. No question of fleshly desire entered into his thoughts ; his bride must not expect him to forget his other responsibilities and linger, loverlike, at her side. He further forbade the ambassador, with rare firmness, to stimulate Elizabeth's interest by implicating him again in that old and hateful story of Mary's jealousy. The very suggestion filled him with abhorrence—an abhorrence so unnaturally violent as to lend support to the

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whispered suspicions of the little monarch's contemporaries.

The letter was sealed and sent off on its journey. Philip, turning once more to the pacification of his fretful Hollanders, the supervision of distant Spain's complicated legal machinery, the preliminaries of the new peace conference with the French, tried to put Elizabeth out of his mind, but without success. Suspended between solid hopes and intangible doubts, he regretted that he had not urged Feria even more emphatically to expedite his answer.

Logically there was no reason why he should anticipate a refusal. In all modesty he recognised that he was the best *parti* to whom the ambitions of any living woman could possibly aspire. The advantages of the union must, he was sure, be as apparent to his bride-to-be as to himself. But there was no certainty that this affair would be settled by logic. He had learned from the poets that the heart of a woman was inscrutable, and from Feria that Henry VIII's daughter suffered from this weakness of her sex in an unusual degree.

Feria had also warned him that the Privy Council and Parliament might be expected to

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raise difficulties. The King never quite succeeded in understanding the mysterious influence that these bodies exercised over an anointed sovereign. He himself had no such obstacles to contend with in his own orbit. A number of his advisers had at first opposed the marriage, but yielded loyally when they saw how strongly he inclined to it. On his promise that Elizabeth would be a good Catholic before the celebration of the wedding they turned to and gave an admirable example of teamwork.

The first and most important step was to obtain the Pope's consent, since nothing could be done without his dispensation. Pius was certain to look with disfavour on the marriage of the most illustrious of Catholics to the most pernicious of heretics, and particularly if he was not consulted beforehand. Since direct appeal would almost certainly be fruitless, the Spanish ministers concocted a little ruse, which Paolo Tiepolo, the Venetian ambassador in Brussels, described briefly to the Doge :

“With this object they have written to Cardinal Pacheco [their colleague in Rome] and others, to represent to his Holiness that

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the King is not at all inclined to this marriage, and that it is necessary that the Pope should inflame and incite him with his authority, making him see clearly that if this marriage do not take place, the Catholic religion in England is to be despised of. The King's confessor has also written to his Holiness on this subject, and to the same effect."

The author of this letter, an exceedingly observant diplomat, had at one time been certain that the King of Spain and the new Queen of England would never marry ; he now changed his mind and predicted to the Doge and Senate of his Republic that they probably would. Well-informed persons, especially on the Continent (for obvious reasons the proposal was not openly discussed in England till a few weeks later) were inclined to agree with him. The atmosphere of confidence began to have its effect on Philip. He had recently given way to the French on various disputed items for the sake of reaching an agreement and going home to Spain. Now, observing their dismay at the rumours of his forthcoming engagement, he stiffened and took a stronger line. With grave satisfaction he foresaw the day when he

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and Elizabeth, indissolubly bound to one another, should subdue France and share the sovereignty of Europe in just proportions as between husband and wife.

By the time the King's answer arrived in London the distracted Feria was ready to retire with his new bride to the comparative peace of Continental politics. When the courier appeared he was actually on the point of drafting his resignation, but laid it aside and eagerly tore open the long-awaited document. Accustomed from long experience to Philip's epistolary style, he swiftly unwound the doubts, contradictions and qualifying periphrases in which the King had wrapped his answer and at length found the authority for which he was looking. Without waste of time he arranged an audience with the Queen and set off to deliver his Majesty's proposal.

For some elusive reason the interview fell short of the ambassador's expectation. He had not precisely expected Elizabeth to swoon with rapture, but he had at least counted on her delight and surprise. She did, indeed, express gratification and told him how deeply she respected Philip both as a king and a man, but the manner of her speech indicated practice

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rather than inspiration. She might have been talking of just another suitor instead of the monarch of half the known world. It struck the ambassador that she seemed almost to have expected the proposal, despite his elaborate precautions to ensure its secrecy. There was in her attitude none of the uncertainty which Carew had shown in his own random hint. Feria made a mental note to find out if his letters had been tampered with, and later remembered to include it in a memorandum for the Bishop de Quadra.

Apart from this Elizabeth's manner was not unsatisfactory. She must be given time, she explained, to think the proposal over, to find out her own feelings, to seek the advice of her friends, to consult Parliament. All this implied further waiting, the employment that more than any other depressed the Count's spirits, but he was cheered by the encouraging promise in her concluding words. She begged him to assure Philip—and he gathered that she would have made her assurance even stronger were it not for the caution necessarily imposed on a ruler—"that, should she marry, he would be preferred to all."

Feria transmitted the substance of the inter-

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view to his master in a vein of tempered optimism. The delay was disappointing but not unreasonable, and the Queen unquestionably seemed pleased. Philip, who did not share his ambassador's constitutional impatience and was better gifted with the power of waiting, instructed Feria to express his satisfaction with her answer and to continue to urge on her the advantages of his "friendship." The ambassador, after executing these orders, let the matter rest, though closely watching, under cover of his other occupations, for a suitable occasion to take it up again.

CHAPTER VIII

AN INTERLUDE OF SPLENDOUR

DURING the next fortnight it would have been impossible for Feria in any event to fix Elizabeth's attention on matters of state. She was busy with the preparations for her coronation and the opening of her first Parliament, two great ceremonies which temporarily superseded wars, suitors and religious reforms in her mind and the public's. It was her ambition to give the world a show it would not soon forget.

The Spanish ambassador was not present ; he had been offended at Elizabeth's choice of officiating bishops and refused her invitation, but Il Schifanoya, the Italian who was so horrified at the burlesque of cardinals, bishops, abbots and other religious dignitaries, has left a minute account, preserved in the Venetian State Papers, of both spectacles.

This author, who originally came to England as a servant of the Prior of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem to find himself left stranded in London by his employer, was trying, like

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many others in the same strait, to make a living at free lance journalism. No more tireless correspondent ever breathed: the name of Il Schifanoya, "the lazy fellow," is a gross libel on his industry. He wrote frequent and incredibly voluminous letters to distinguished compatriots at home and abroad, without even the incentive of a previous commission or of subsequent payment. The exalted persons to whom these letters were addressed read them with interest and passed them on to other highly-placed gentlemen with captious reflections on their accuracy. But to the author's prayers for a regular job in a legation or a small subsidy to enable him to continue his writing they unanimously turned a deaf ear. Even the courtesy of acknowledgment was apparently denied him. "I have not received any reply to my many letters," he humbly wrote to Ottaviano Vivaldino, the Mantuan ambassador to Philip, "but will continue to do my duty." He was finally reduced to writing the following pathetic appeal to his principal (and involuntary) employer, the Castellan of Mantua: "Though I am content to undertake the fatigue of writing, my means do not admit of my paying the postage of letters, and the

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cost of paper, wax, string and ink." This modest petition seems also to have been ignored.

More distressing even than the hardships of poverty were the sufferings he was forced to undergo by contact with the heathens among whom fate had flung him. He urged on Vivaldino, as a reason for being transferred to a diplomatic post abroad, "my conscience will not allow me to associate with heretics, and to hold other opinions in secret." His views on the treatment of heretics were as uncompromising as Feria's own, though his capacity for action was necessarily more limited. After the meeting of Parliament he wrote to Vivaldino that the dissenting preachers were threatening to emigrate to Geneva unless that body passed the new religious acts, and added the following devout wish :

"I pray God to inspire them with this resolve, that there may befall them what lately happened to some sixty of their comrades who were returning in like manner to assist in cultivating the field of the Lord (as they say), and went to fish instead in the realms of Neptune, who, having need of their doctrine there, had Aeolus to command

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the winds to sink them when crossing the Channel, as they did . . . If these should perish in like manner, as I hope to God they will, Neptune would be a great gainer, for they are clever, loquacious and fervent, both in preaching and in composing squibs and lampoons, or ballads, as they entitle them, which are sold publicly, of so horrible and abominable a description that I wonder their authors do not perish by the act of God. I thought of sending you a copy, but repented, not wishing to sow evil seed in your country."

The Coronation was to take place on Sunday, January 15th, 1559. On the 12th Elizabeth and her Court left Whitehall by water for the Tower, where she was to remain till her state entry into London on the Saturday. The departure was so brilliant that even Il Schifanova, strongly patriotic in all things Italian and critical of everything English, was impressed—the gathering of "ships, galleys, brigantines, etc., " was so elaborate as to remind him of "Ascension Day at Venice, when the Signory go to espouse the sea," one of the most famous ceremonies of mediaeval and Renaissance Europe.

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“At 2 p.m., the flood-tide then serving to pass under London Bridge,” continued the chronicler, “Her Majesty, accompanied by many knights, barons, ladies, and by the whole Court, passing through the private corridor, embarked in her barge, which was covered with its usual tapestries, both externally and internally, and was towed by a long galley rowed by forty men in their shirts, with a band of music, as usual, when the Queen goes by water. Her Majesty having passed the bridge, in sight of the Tower, some pieces of artillery were fired; she landed at the private stairs, and, entering by a little bridge, was seen but by very few persons.

“On the morning of Saturday the 14th, as in the afternoon Her Majesty was to make her state entry into London, the whole Court so sparkled with jewels and gold collars, that they cleared the air, though it snowed a little. During this assemblage the Queen dined. The houses on the way were all decorated; there being on both sides of the street, from Blackfriars to St. Paul’s, wooden barricades, on which the merchants and artisans of every trade leant in long black gowns lined with hoods of red and black cloth, such as are usually worn

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by the rectors of universities in Italy, with all their ensigns, banners and standards, which were innumerable, and made a very fine show. Owing to the deep mud caused by the foul weather and by the multitude of people and of horses, everyone had made preparation, by placing sand and gravel in front of their houses.

"The number of horses was in all 1000, and last of all came Her Majesty in an open litter, trimmed down to the ground with gold brocade, with a raised pile, and carried by two very handsome mules covered with the same material, and surrounded by a multitude of footmen in crimson velvet jerkins, all studded with massive gilt silver, with the arms of a white and red rose on their breasts and backs, and laterally the letters E.R. for Elizabetta Regina wrought in relief, the usual livery of this Crown, which makes a superb show. They were uncovered, and without anything on their heads. The Gentlemen-Pensioners of the Axe walked at the sides, with hammers in hand, and clad in crimson damask, given them by the Queen for livery, all being on foot and bare-headed.

"Her Majesty was dressed in a royal robe of very rich cloth of gold, with a double-raised stiff pile, and on her head over a coif of cloth

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of gold, beneath which was her hair, a plain gold crown without lace, as a princess, but covered with jewels, and nothing in her hands but gloves.

“ Behind the litter came Lord Robert Dudley, Master of the Horse, mounted on a very fine charger, and leading a white hackney covered with cloth of gold. Then came the Lord Chamberlain and other Lords of Her Majesty’s Privy Chamber, who were followed by nine pages dressed in crimson satin on very handsome chargers richly caparisoned, with their Governor and Lieutenant.”

At the gates of the City the Londoners had raised a huge triumphal arch divided into three floors. On the first were the effigies of her grandfather, Henry VII, and his wife Elizabeth in their royal robes, the one bearing the white rose of Lancaster and the other the red rose of York. Above them sat “Henry VIII, with a white and red rose in front of him, with the pomegranate between them, and Queen Anne Boleyn, mother of the present one, with a white eagle and a gold crown on its head, and a gilt sceptre in its right talon, the other resting on a hillock,” and “on the third floor above a Queen was seen in majesty,

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to represent the present one, who is descended from the aforesaid.” The whole of the arch was decorated with the royal arms of England, trophies, festoons and verses in Latin and English celebrating the reunion of England after the Wars of the Roses in the House of Tudor. As Elizabeth approached the arch the procession halted while a boy, seated “in a little chair above the centre door, briefly interpreted the whole subject, and Her Majesty listened to him most attentively, evincing much satisfaction.”

The splendid parade moved on, its accompanying music frequently drowned by the applause of the spectators. The citizens of London, who adored Elizabeth both in her own person and as the symbol of the new age which was rising from the barbarous memories of her sister’s reign, had outdone themselves in the construction of arches and towers and the composition of verses and paintings. The aldermen of the City met her in Cheapside and presented her with a purse containing a thousand gold marks ; the Recorder of London greeted her with an address of welcome, thoughtfully, however, “making her a very short speech.” And as she passed out of the

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City by way of St. Paul's Churchyard and Ludgate the scholars of St. Paul's School delivered a florid Latin oration in praise of England's future glory and her Queen's moral and intellectual virtues. “*Hac imperante, pietas vigebit, Anglia florebit, aurea saecula redibunt.*” And so the glittering column wound its way past the grey, grim riverside houses of the nobility and on past Charing Cross to Westminster.

On the following morning Mass was sung for the Coronation in Westminster Abbey, “which was decorated with the handsomest and most precious tapestries that were ever seen, they having been purchased by Henry VIII, representing on one side the whole of Genesis, and on the other the Acts of the Apostles, from a design by Raffael d'Urbino; and the chambers were hung with the history of Caesar and Pompey.” Some of these decorations which so struck the observer are still familiar exhibits at Hampton Court.

Il Schifanova was constantly torn between delight at the pageantry and disapproval of the ritual. His conflicting emotions appear in his description of the magnificent scene in the abbey:

“The Queen was received under the canopy

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by the Archbishop and another Bishop, they having previously perfumed her with incense, giving her the holy water and the pax, the choristers singing ; then the Earl of Rutland followed Her Majesty with a plain naked sword without any point, signifying Ireland, which has never been conquered ; then came the Earl of Exeter with the second sword ; the third was borne by Viscount Montague ; the Earl of Arundel having been made Lord Steward and High Constable for that day, carried the fourth (sword) of royal justice, with its gilt scabbard loaded with pearls. The orb was carried by the Duke of Norfolk, Lord Marshal, and in advance were knights clad in the ducal fashion, carrying the three crowns, they being the three Kings-at-arms ; they bore the three sceptres, with their three crowns of iron, of silver, and of gold on their heads, and in their hands three naked iron swords, signifying the three titles of England, France, and Ireland.

“ In this way they proceeded to the church, the Queen’s long train being carried by the Duchess of Norfolk, after whom followed the Lord Chamberlain, upon purple cloth spread on the ground ; and as Her Majesty passed, the cloth was cut away by those who could get it.

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Then followed the duchesses, marchionesses, countesses, etc., dragging their trains after them, going two by two, and being exquisitely dressed, with their coronets on their heads, and so handsome and beautiful that it was a marvellous sight. On Her Majesty's arrival, all the bells in London ringing, she ascended the lofty tribune erected between the high altar and the choir, being thus exhibited to the people, of whom it was asked if they wished her to be their crowned Queen? Whereupon they all shouted 'Yes'; and the organs, fifes, trumpets, and drums playing, the bells also ringing, it seemed as if the world were come to an end. Descending from the tribune, the Queen placed herself under her royal canopy; and then the choristers commenced the Mass, which was sung by the Dean of her Chapel, her Chaplain, the Bishops not having chosen to say Mass without elevating the Host or consecrating it, as that worthy individual did; the Epistle and Gospel being recited in English."

When the ceremonies were over and Elizabeth had characteristically "twice changed her apparel," everyone save the clergy returned to Westminster Hall for the banquet, "her

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Majesty carrying in her hands the sceptre and orb, and wearing the ample royal robe of cloth of gold. She returned very cheerfully, with a most smiling countenance for everyone, giving them all a thousand greetings, so that in my opinion"—Il Schifanova echoes the verdict of de Quadra on the occasion of Arundel's misconduct—"she exceeded the bounds of gravity and decorum." The banquet had been carefully prepared with great pains by the Duke of Norfolk as Lord Marshal and the Earl of Arundel as Lord Steward, but Elizabeth insisted on personally "inspecting the hall and excluding many persons, and carefully attending to the tables and the kitchen." Having once again changed her costume, she was ready to sit down to eat at three in the afternoon when the water and the napkin were given her by the noblemen, Lord Howard of Effingham, and the Earl of Sussex, who acted as server and carver respectively, both of them serving somewhat inconveniently on their knees.

The Queen, as was her custom, ate alone. "Beside Her Majesty there stood those two Earls who had supported her to the Abbey by the arms, viz., Shrewsbury and Pembroke, with the sceptre and orb in their hands ; the

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others likewise being in the Queen's presence with the aforesaid iron swords. They all remained covered with their coronets on their heads, and although Her Majesty spoke occasionally to some of them, they never uncovered, except when she drank all their healths, thanking them for the trouble they had taken."

Four other tables were spread in the vast hall, at each of which were seated upwards of two hundred persons, "Barons titled and untitled, with Council and Aldermen, Mayor, Sheriffs and other men of the law, servants of the Court, baronesses, duchesses, ladies . . . the peeresses having their coronets on their heads." All the guests were apparently dressed in the same colour as the servants, for Il Schifanova after remarking on the red liveries of the latter adds, "no one was allowed, or at most but a few, to enter the Hall, or to remain there, unless he was dressed in red."

The banquet lasted until after one o'clock in the morning. The Italian (presumably also dressed in red) seems to have sat open-eyed through the whole ten hours. He saw everything, and found everything he saw very "stately." His ear alone remained critical. "Much music was performed, but it not being

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remarkable, and having heard better, I will say nothing about it."

What delighted him most was the ancient ceremony of the knight's challenge, an echo out of the long past age of chivalry : " After the second course, which was brought like the first one to the trumpets' sound, and preceded by the Earl of Arundel and the Duke of Norfolk on horseback, a knight in steel armour, spear on thigh, and on a very handsome barbed charger, after saluting the Queen, proclaimed three times to the people that if there was any person of any grade or condition who denied, disputed, or contradicted that the Queen his Sovereign (pointing at her) was the true and legitimate crowned Queen of England, France, and Ireland, he was ready to maintain it by force of arms to the death, throwing down his gauntlet each time ; and as no one answered him, he took leave of Her Majesty, who drank his health and thanked him, giving him a silver-gilt cup worth 200 crowns. This was a country gentleman, whose family has long been privileged to do this at all the coronations."

The Queen herself, exhausted by her exertions, took to her bed and remained there a week. On the 28th, her health and the

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extremely bad weather being somewhat improved, she rose, put on a “royal crimson robe lined with ermine . . . fitted close to the body . . . high up to the throat, with a lace trimming at the top, and a round cape of ermine like the one worn by the Doge of Venice, with a cap of beaten gold covered with very fine oriental pearls on her head, and a necklace from which was suspended a most marvellous pendant,” and was carried in her “ordinary” litter to the services in the Abbey. The crowd was as great and as noisy as ever, shouting as she crossed, “God save and maintain thee,” to which she answered, turning from one side to the other, “Gramercy, good people,” smiling most sweetly on all of them. The services were long and the preacher, Dr. Cox, “a married priest,” exhorted her in a sermon of an hour and a half’s duration “to destroy the images of the saints, the churches, the monasteries.” She then proceeded to the House of Lords, where the Lord Chancellor made an “eloquent speech” on the reform of religion, the change in the penal laws and the need for taxation for purposes of carrying on the war.

The Queen left and the Commons proceeded to elect a Speaker, “who is the personage who

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goes to and fro expressing and reporting the will of the Lower House, and of the House of Lords." This done the Queen was notified and came again to Parliament, to listen to another speech in which the Speaker excused "himself as not being worthy of such a charge nor sufficient for it." The Queen's Commissioner answered on her behalf that she commanded his election, whereupon the Speaker turned and made the two traditional requests: "the first, that it be lawful for every member to state his opinion freely, without respect or fear, or dread of capital punishment or loss of property or incurring any penalty; the second, that no member be legally molested by his creditors during Parliament." These were, as always, granted, "though," adds Il Schifanova, who knew very little about it, "everyone is careful how he speaks, lest he incur either wrath or contempt."

It was generations before the magnificence of these spectacles were forgotten. Sixty years later old men would wag critical grey heads as the Stuart pageants went by and patronise the young by recalling the glories of Queen Elizabeth's Coronation or the opening of her first Parliament in January 1559.

CHAPTER IX

FRANCE TAKES A HAND

IT was with some trepidation that Feria watched the assembly of the new Parliament. The majority were known to be fanatic in temper and opposed to all forms of Spanish influence. Their two principal desires were to have the Queen assume her father's title of Supreme Head of the Church and to marry a Protestant, either of native origin or one who could be easily domesticated. The ambassador had neither the means nor the inclination to interfere in the subsequent proceedings between the Queen and the lawmakers, since most of the latter were unknown to him and he was quite content that they should remain so. It also seemed the better policy to say nothing and wait for a crisis which would drive the Queen in desperation to the shelter of Philip's friendly arms.

Parliament's demand that she confirm the separation from Rome placed Elizabeth in a quandary. She was unwilling to antagonise the body that voted the taxes, for she was as

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always in need of money. On the other hand she knew better than the legislators that the country was still too feeble to challenge the enmity of Spain and the Pope. She staved off decision as long as she could and then resolved the difficulty with one of her characteristic formulae. She could not, she announced, take the title of Supreme Head because "this honour is due to Christ alone and cannot belong to any human being whatsoever; besides which these titles have been so foully contaminated by the anti-Christ that they can no longer be adopted by anyone without impiety." She would merely allow herself to be called "governor." Spain might object to her reasons, but would approve of her act; her Protestant friends' disappointment at her refusal of the papal title would be largely appeased by her impolite references to the Pope.

Parliament had not been convened many days before it began an active agitation on the question of the Queen's marriage. The country was deeply anxious about the succession—it remembered only too well the horrors and the bloodshed before her grandfather Henry VII, and later her brother and sister, had made good

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their claims to the throne. The natural and obvious protection against similar dangers was that the Queen should marry and have children. Her frail health, which seemed convincing proof that she could not live long, made the need, all the more acute. To Elizabeth's extreme annoyance the spokesmen of the House did not hesitate to bring these considerations to her attention with almost brutal candour. Her marriage was the one subject on which she particularly resented interference or advice. Delicate personal matters were involved, having to do with her physical womanhood, upon which she enforced on her contemporaries a silence so impenetrable that history's prodigious curiosity has had perforce to remain unsatisfied. Even on the purely political side she held that her marriage was no one's affair but her own. It was infuriating, therefore, to find Parliament holding public debates on a matter which her intimates approached only with extreme circumspection.

She was frequently tempted to tell the presumptuous lawmakers to mind their own business ; now and then she flew into a rage and did so. But she soon discovered that Philip's proposal would enable her to make

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capital out of their solicitude and at the same time enact a little comedy of the kind she enjoyed. Her performance was not perhaps so finished as it became later, when the Archduke Charles or the Duc d'Alençon was cast for the part now unconsciously played by Philip, but she made up in zest what she lacked in experience.

When Parliament continued to press her to take a husband she finally answered that she was too devoted to her people ever to marry ; she well knew that the public, though anxious for an heir, would be touched by this reason for her failure to provide one. But the hard-headed legislators, less deeply affected by this kind of sentiment, hinted that it was not easy to raise subsidies for the Crown in a country whose dynastic future was insecure. Elizabeth then decided that she was perhaps in the mood to marry after all, but would have no man who did not please her. Parliament, unable to object to this condition, stated in its abstract form, professed itself delighted, whereupon the news began to circulate that the Queen was giving serious thought to a proposal from the King of Spain.

The very whisper of another Spanish marriage

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aroused the majority party in the Council and the Lower House to an uproarious resistance. Their spokesmen argued that the suitor's character was suspicious and his religious intolerance unbearable ; the same unhappiness he had brought on Mary by his neglect and selfishness would be Elizabeth's if she accepted him. They recalled the plight to which he had reduced the country by his extravagance, and reasoned that an alliance with him would be even less helpful and more disastrous now than it had been four years earlier. His treasury was bare, rebellion threatened in Flanders (with whom England was in religious and economic sympathy), and the war with France looked like becoming chronic. They also reminded her that her father had broken with Rome because the Pope had refused to annul his marriage to his dead brother's wife, and implored her not to dishonour his memory by marrying her late sister's husband.

This last appeal cut close to the knuckle, for it brought up the whole question of Elizabeth's legitimacy. If she could legally marry her brother-in-law, then Henry VIII's divorce was void, for no more had ever been urged against Katherine of Aragon than her previous marriage

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to Henry's deceased brother. In that case Henry had never been free to marry Anne Boleyn, and it followed that Elizabeth had been born out of wedlock. The total of these arguments was so impressive that even various important Catholics became alarmed and urged her more or less openly not to accept Philip's proposal.

But Elizabeth would promise nothing. As long as the opponents of Spain thought that she might eventually decline to marry the Spanish King, they would give her what she wanted and be afraid to deny or bully her. Philip on the other hand would be compelled to protect her as long as she kept him hopeful of her ultimate acceptance. She was in the happy position of having her own way as long as she did nothing.

But the situation held another interesting possibility. King Henry II of France, who feared her marriage to Philip more than any other imaginable occurrence, had already begun to make secret overtures to her. Henry was supporting the one dangerous pretender to her throne and refusing to restore Calais despite Spain's earnest solicitations. Though she and Henry were at war, Elizabeth saw no reason

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why she should not listen to whatever he had to say. It could do no harm, provided certain precautions were taken, and some good might come out of it for England.

Feria had foreseen the possibility and already suspected the existence of a subterranean intrigue between England and France over Calais. The dispute over that port was, in fact, one of the important reasons urged on Philip for hastening the proposal to Elizabeth. Spain had to have peace at any price; the pigheaded English refused to include Calais in that price. To control England it was necessary to control England's Queen, and the surest way of controlling her, since she was a woman, was to marry her. She could then be made to leave the Calais tangle to Philip, ignore Henry's sinister advances and bring her husband much-needed peace as part of her dowry. There was thus a complete chain of logic leading from the dispute over Calais to the marriage of Philip and Elizabeth.

Henry, being half French, could appreciate logic; being also half Italian he was ingenious at circumventing it. He was as tired of war as his Spanish rival, and even more indisposed to begin it again, since it could have only one

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result if his enemies made up their differences and in whole-hearted concord set about imposing a peace instead of negotiating one. If, on the other hand, he could widen the split in the alliance against him, he would not only escape this danger but would be free to make a separate peace with Spain, thus securing her neutrality while he invaded England and seated his daughter-in-law on the English throne.

Henry was, therefore, more than disturbed when the hum of gossip relating to Philip's proposal reached him. He had one Anglo-Spanish marriage to thank for his present troubles ; another would certainly be pernicious and might easily prove disastrous. The thing must be prevented or, if that could not be done, rendered harmless in advance. While waiting to formulate some concrete scheme, he released, through the Venetian ambassador, a *ballon d'essai* to the effect that he would withdraw Mary Stuart's pretensions if Elizabeth would refrain from pressing the Calais question. Further, if Elizabeth would agree not to marry outside her country, he would cause Mary to waive her title in perpetuity.

Since Elizabeth, however, took no notice and even declined to admit that Mary had any



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title to waive, Henry saw that he must improve his offer. The obvious bribe was to give in to the English over Calais, but this he dared not do. French pride was fully as touchy on this subject as English ; in addition Calais was an integral part of the scheme of conquest he had in mind. After taking further counsel he decided on a variation of the ruse which his father, Francis I, had employed with success against Henry VIII.

The negotiations were opened through Lord Grey, the English commander who had been captured at Guisnes with his army shortly after the fall of Calais at the beginning of 1558. To send his noble captive back gratis, however, would be sure to rouse Philip's suspicion, so Henry offered to exchange him for a prisoner of equal rank. If he could be repatriated in this way, he would be a plausible blind for the secret overtures that were to follow. Elizabeth agreed, but since the English had unfortunately lost every action of consequence in the late war she had no prisoner of note to exchange. Then she remembered that Philip had had better luck in his battles with the French, and coolly proposed to Feria that his master should buy her lost general back for her

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with one of his own captives, the Baron de la Rochefoucauld. The ambassador, after a slight hesitation, wrote advising Philip to conciliate Elizabeth at this critical time by doing what she asked. She and Henry apparently took Philip's compliance for granted, since Grey arrived in England before Feria's letter could have been acted on in Brussels.

Unlike Regulus the Roman, whose mission his somewhat resembled, Grey was enthusiastic in the cause of peace. He liked and admired his captors, who had treated him more as a guest than a prisoner, and cherished delightful memories of their excellent entertainment and charming manners during his enforced residence amongst them.

His reception in his own country made him wish that he had never left France. Elizabeth kept him cooling his heels in the corridors of the palace for days before she would consent to see him. He was in disgrace and she made him feel it. When, finally, through the intercession of friends in the Council, he was allowed into her presence, she at once demanded what he meant by losing the stronghold that had been entrusted to him, told him she expected other results from her generals and informed him

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that in her opinion he was an extremely poor specimen of a soldier.

Having had her say, she allowed him to stammer out his defence. He had, as a matter of fact, a valid excuse for his defeat, since Mary's Government had neglected to send him the reinforcements or arms required for the defence of Guisnes. The Queen listened with a non-committal expression and answered that she would suspend judgment until she had fuller information. Several of her Council, she admitted, had told her that he was not altogether to blame for the loss of his army, and that his previous record was good. Otherwise "whatever defence he could make in words, he should never have returned to her sight, without returning also to her the place which he had when he last departed from her."

Having performed this little scene for the public benefit, and especially for any Spanish agents who might happen to be listening, Elizabeth detained him until the general audience had been dismissed, when she gave him "leave privately to make declaration of such matter as he had to say." (The report is in the hand of Secretary Cecil, who was present throughout the interview.) Grey

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repeated the lavish compliments with which the King of France had entrusted him for her Majesty and then went on to transmit the suggestion that it would be in the best interests of both countries if Spain were to be ignored and a secret adjustment of outstanding difficulties arrived at in a friendly manner. The proposal came ostensibly from the Duc de Guise, Mary Stuart's uncle, since it was dangerous to drag in the King's name, but it was well understood that Guise was speaking for his sovereign.

Elizabeth said she would think it over. Two days later she summoned Grey and told him that he might go back and speak to his friend the Duke or write to him, whichever he preferred, to the following effect. She, Elizabeth, had always had a warm friendship for the French and their King, who had been kind to her in her youth. She regretted the war, for which she was in no way to blame, her sister having left it on her hands when she died. However, since it was there, and "that thereby her realm had received a notorious loss . . . one noble member thereof now being in the French King's possession," she must accept the facts as they were and decline to

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talk of peace until Henry signified his readiness to restore “all things done in her sister’s time since the war began, as it were revoked and put out of memory.” If Henry would do that, she would be glad not only to renew the old amity but, when the occasion arose, to increase it. Otherwise she would have to consider the wishes of her people, who, she declared with more vigour than truth, would rather renew the war than surrender Calais.

The answer, to inexperienced ears, might have sounded unpropitious, but Henry was able to read between the lines. It was clear that Elizabeth was not averse to a secret understanding which would leave Spain isolated, and was evidently ready, despite the high-sounding ultimatum about Calais, to discuss an alternative bargain. It seemed probable to Henry that she was merely showing proper caution towards unofficial conversations which he on his side might later repudiate. He felt encouraged to take a further step.

His agent in this second stage was a Florentine, Guido Cavalcanti, who was at home in nearly every court and chancellery of Europe, although he invariably entered and left them by the back door. The records of the next

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twenty years are sprinkled with his mysterious appearances in London. He drifted like a mist across the Narrow Seas, a shadow of other men's substance, the whispered echo of other men's voices. During the early part of December, while Grey was fretting in the royal ante-chambers and Feria moving heaven and earth to find out what the Florentine was up to, Cavalcanti was visiting in the houses of the influential with introductions from Henry's cousin, the Vidame de Chartres, an Anglophile who wanted to be remembered to his many friends in England. By the time that Grey had received his ambiguous answer and transmitted it to his friend of Guise, the Florentine had stolen back to Paris and reported to his patron the pacific feelings prevalent amongst the English ruling classes and the fact that the Queen had meant more than appeared on the surface of her communication through Grey.

On the strength of these reports Henry felt that the time was ripe to push aside his several screens and make a personal appearance. He therefore wrote Elizabeth a letter, addressing her as "*Madame ma bonne sœur*," in which he exploited the full resources of his mother tongue to express the esteem which he had

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always felt for her and her virtues, which was “*en rien diminuée pour la guerre survenue à mon grand regret.*” That regrettable conflict he was quite ready to lay to the account of the late Queen, and to forgive “*les dommages grands et incroyables*” which he had sustained in consequence of it. He proposed, in order to terminate the needless and deplorable hostility between their countries, to send Cavalcanti over *incontinent*, with a plan whereby that end might be achieved, and perpetual peace established between them.

This letter was written on December 30th, and early in January Cavalcanti was again in London, equipped with instructions to suggest verbally to Elizabeth that France and England should each appoint secret commissioners to meet in one of four French villages named, and there strike a bargain which should satisfy both sides and ignore Spain altogether.

Henry had advanced, but not sufficiently to satisfy Elizabeth. He had said nothing about returning Calais, which was what she was after. Until he indicated a change of heart on this subject she saw nothing to be gained by submitting herself to the risks of a secret conference. Diplomatic usage between monarchs

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required, however, that she answer his letter by one of her own.

She therefore wrote to "*Monsieur mon bon frère*" that she was overwhelmed by his display of affection, and that he might rest assured that hers was of equal warmth. She heartily subscribed to his wish for a permanent peace between them ; she was even ready to go further and sign a treaty which "may tend not only to cease these present wars, but also abolish and extinguish the occasions, grounds, and roots which might produce the like in time to come."

She begged, however, to offer one of two alternative methods. A secret conference would compel the departure of certain notables of her Court ; the Spanish ambassador would be sure to detect their absence and smell a rat. It would be better and safer, she suggested, if Henry would send Cavalcanti back to her with a full written statement of the points on which they might arrive at an agreement. She would then answer, and they would know where they were. If Henry did not favour this procedure, he and she might each select one or two of the commissioners already on the spot and instruct them privately to draw up

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an agreement to which France and England would adhere when the plenary session with the Spaniards opened at Cateau-Cambrésis. The letter concluded with a characteristic Elizabethan flourish. It was intolerable that Henry should remain in ignorance of her fluent French, so she added a postscript in that language, of which the translation reads : “ My fingers are careful to express only the thoughts with which my heart is full. For, as the word of a prince is worth more than the oath of a private person, so disregard of it would deserve hatred and perpetual infamy.”

Cavalcanti again crossed the Channel, bearing Elizabeth’s letter and a memorandum of her two alternative proposals, which were to be repeated to Henry verbally and in absolute secrecy. If neither pleased him, he was to see if he could invent another. Since this bickering over who started the war in the first place was getting them nowhere, Cavalcanti was to tell Henry that obviously Philip was the guilty party. If Henry was prepared to admit that England was not at fault, she was equally ready to absolve France. Let them agree to blame Philip for their losses—and on that subject she felt constrained to emphasise the

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fact that “ England hath all the loss, and France none at all.”

Henry was as prompt as Philip was tardy. He declared himself impressed with Elizabeth’s straightforwardness and her perspicuity in isolating Philip as the sole criminal responsible for the war. He was deeply impressed, he averred, by her idea that the recent conflict should mark a new era in the annals of humanity and be remembered by posterity as the war to end war. He could not agree to the plan of secret meetings between their commissioners at Cateau-Cambrésis, because their actions would be watched “ by the sharpest eyes in the world,” but he fell in with her other suggestion and sent Cavalcanti with a fresh memorandum which he trusted would be a basis for “ a new and firmer pact,” and which the bearer could elaborate to her in detail.

By the same hand he sent “ a small present ” which he begged her to accept with his love.

Elizabeth answered more promptly even than Henry, and this time her whole letter instead of only the postscript was in French. She was beginning to be slightly bored and impatient with her good brother and cousin. The commissioners were already moving to-

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wards Cateau-Cambrésis and he still refused to come to grips with essentials. She hinted that the progress of peace between their countries was not keeping pace with the growth of their personal fondness for one another. In these circumstances she hesitated about accepting his gift.

She had, of course, no intention of returning the "*beau présent*," a very valuable diamond ; she was too fond, as Feria had observed, of having things given her. (The ambassador, by the way, now had a fair idea of what was going on, but was quite at sea both as to Elizabeth's real intentions and what he could do to frustrate the French designs.) But she did not want her acceptance to be misunderstood, either by Henry or by Philip if he happened to hear of it. So she had decided, she explained, to regard the present as a token "of unfeigned friendship of a private prince," and not as a bribe from the king of a country with which her own was at war, thanking him "as many times as there are words in the letters I have written." Out of motives of prudence as well as economy she sent no gift in return.

Her response to Cavalcanti's latest set of instructions was long but to the point. She

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argued out the matter of Calais historically. It would be less painful for the French to part with Calais, which they had held for less than a year, than for the English, who had owned it “beyond memory of all men,” and as the result, not of “words or wars, but by way of exchange for English regions and territories, thereby possessed and quietly kept by the Kings of France.” To Henry’s complaint that he had suffered so much in the war that he was entitled to hold what he had won, she reminded him that they had agreed that Philip was the instigator and sole gainer; it was to Philip therefore that he should look for recompense. It was unjust that, “because the King of Spain was enemy to France, and had done certain hostilities thereupon, therefore to acquit the same, England (the greater part whereof, both of nobility and the people, had no disposition to be at enmity with France) must be bereaved of one of her dearest members, and France must thereof make her only comfort and consolation.”

Henry, however, with equally poetic feeling, depicted in his answer France’s joy at having her long-lost Calais restored to her, and the corresponding grief she would feel if it were

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again to be torn away. Neither he nor Elizabeth expected to convince the other, but these things had to be said—the public, as always, demanded that purity of motive should accompany the practice of politics. Pages and pages of sentiment were filled before his Christian Majesty could bring himself to confess, in his latest memorandum for Cavalcanti, what really worried him, speaking frankly and “concealing nothing that was in his heart.”

What effect, he wanted to know, would Elizabeth’s marriage have on the fate of Calais? There was no doubt that Philip was itching to appropriate the town for himself. Elizabeth had a right to know that Philip had tried to get it behind her back by the offer of valuable properties to France in exchange for it. (His Christian Majesty was here taking a slight liberty with truth for the sake of effect.) What assurance had he, Henry, that the Spanish King would not calmly seize it if Elizabeth married him, considering that a wife usually does what her husband tells her to? And if Spain and England then entered into a permanent treaty, France would not only have lost Calais, but would find herself confronted with

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a formidable coalition prepared to hold it on behalf of the European Colossus.

It was a good effort on Henry's part. The hint of Spain's duplicity in treating privately for the disputed port would create ill-feeling if not an actual rift between his enemies, while Elizabeth would be compelled to deny publicly that she intended marrying Philip if she hoped to obtain the peaceful surrender of Calais.

Elizabeth saw the trap, however, and deftly avoided it. It was premature, she answered, to talk of marriage as yet. But even if she did marry, and no matter whom, Henry might rest assured that Calais would never be part of her *dot*. It was English and so was she, "being descended by father and mother of pure English blood," she declared, with a flash of that rhetorical grandeur that made her subjects her slaves for nearly half a century, "and not of Spain, as her late sister was." The whole of the English nation as well as herself "would as diligently see that Calais stayed out of Spanish hands as they which now retain it."

The correspondence went on and Cavalcanti continued to steal noiselessly out of Whitehall and the Louvre between sunset and dawn,

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but it was becoming apparent to the principals that in order to reach any sort of settlement one of them would have to part with more than compliments, or even presents, and this neither was prepared to do.

Henry's disappointment was the greater, because his expectations had been higher. He had opened the negotiations in the belief that it would be easy to separate the young Queen from her protector by means of the same trick his father had played on hers. He had more to gain than she, for she was comparatively safe in the shelter of the Spanish alliance, and he in corresponding danger so long as that alliance endured. If it was broken he might defy Philip : when he saw that he could not break it he became uneasy lest Philip should suspect his duplicity and, out of fear and revenge, impose more stringent conditions of peace than those already agreed upon at Cercamps. So, while mingling his flatteries to Elizabeth with repeated injunctions to secrecy, Henry began to disengage himself gently from the embarrassments of his double dealing. It was safer after all, he decided, to leave his differences with England to be settled openly at Cateau-Cambrésis. And though he had not been able

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to induce Elizabeth to reject Philip for Calais (which he never intended to give her) there might yet be ways in which a fertile brain could forestall the dreaded marriage.

Luckily for Henry's peace of mind he was ignorant of the fact that his dear sister had not accompanied him into the labyrinth of secret diplomacy without first securing her safe return. He had at once assumed that because she was working with him against Spain she trusted him more than she did Philip ; actually she trusted him less. It could do no harm to hear what Henry had to say ; at best she might get something out of him, and at worst his eagerness for her favour would enhance her value in Philip's eyes. The one danger was that Philip might be angered at her deceit, withdraw his protection and leave her at Henry's mercy. She had no doubt that in such an event Henry would not scruple to exploit her defencelessness. Her method of avoiding this risk was extremely simple ; at the very beginning she informed Philip through Feria that Henry was trying to tempt her into clandestine negotiations, and that " his Majesty shall be most assured, that nothing shall be therein done . . . but that he shall be thereof

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made from time to time privy." This much the ambassador was allowed to know for safety's sake, and very little more, since Elizabeth put her own construction on the phrase "from time to time."

So, like Theseus, she entered Henry's labyrinth unrolling a ball of twine, leaving Philip as her Ariadne to hold the other end. The King of Spain regarded the cord uncertainly. Obviously Elizabeth was not trying to deceive him with Henry, or she would not have told him what she was doing ; nevertheless he was uneasy. Bitter experience had taught him that the Valois were treacherous, and Feria had frequently warned him that the lady was fickle. He therefore admonished the ambassador to keep his eyes open and see that nothing underhand was attempted.

It was a job after Feria's own heart and he set about it with alacrity. Less trustful than his master, it at once struck him that there was something strange about Elizabeth's openness —it was too unlike her. Howard's departure for France had been delayed for over a month. Why? His inquiries were answered with a story about an accident to the Chamberlain's ship, but the explanation seemed altogether too

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pat. Feria looked further and discovered that Cavalcanti had been in hiding in the Treasurer's chambers in the Palace, but had slipped away a few days before. Putting two and two together he concluded that Howard was being purposely detained to await the outcome of the negotiations with France, which indicated that Elizabeth was giving Henry's offers far more serious consideration than appeared on the face of her supposedly candid avowal. The ambassador confided his doubts to Philip and asked for instructions. As for Cavalcanti, he had a suggestion of his own to put forward : " I am having him well watched so that directly he puts foot on shore they will let me know, and if your Majesty wishes even for some trick to be played on him it can be done."

Philip thanked Feria for his zeal and left the obstruction of Henry's designs to his discretion, but in the matter of Henry's agent the old temperamental difference between himself and his lieutenant cropped up. " Respecting Guido Cavalcanti," he wrote, " I have only to say that you must try to find out what he brings from France on his return, using any means or ways you think fit." Murder was not mentioned among the means or ways, so Caval-

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canti lived to undertake many other missions to Whitehall, none of them any more successful than this first one.

Satisfied that Feria would know how to deal with Elizabeth in London, Philip undertook to see what could be done to influence her through her commissioners on the Continent. He sent for Dr. Wotton, and talked to him long and earnestly about the sincerity of his own intentions, the harm that would surely come to England if Elizabeth allowed herself to be decoyed by the false Henry, and the safety with honour that would accrue to her as well as himself if they maintained inviolate the ancient alliance between their countries. (The alliance to which he referred had now enjoyed an intermittent life of about sixteen years.) Could not Wotton warn her of the dangers of her present course? Even if she was not seriously entangling herself with France, one could not play with pitch and remain undefiled. And while he was about it, might it not be a good idea for the reverend doctor to put in a word about religion?

Wotton listened and agreed to write to Cecil. The letter that he sent, on January 9th, would not have been altogether acceptable to

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the King, but the Dean of Canterbury and York was a man of independent mind. No mention was made of Philip's anxiety with regard to religion, and the wistful hint he dropped about the marriage was entirely ignored. The Peace Commissioners' terms of reference omitted any mention of these subjects, therefore Wotton, as a conscientious diplomat, saw no reason to bring them up. Otherwise he did what was asked of him in his own way.

The Spanish alliance, he urged on the Secretary, was a concrete advantage and should be preserved, although one could not take the word of a Spaniard with childlike confidence. On the other hand the word of a Frenchman was worth nothing at all, and an agreement with Henry would have less value than the paper it was written on. The letter rambled on, revealing the writer's shrewd, quaint, worldly wisdom in every sentence: "And although they (the French) require to talk of peace, and will make gay overtures to that intent; I cannot but remember, that so did the wolf to the shepherd, when he would have his dog from him, that made all the debate 'twixt them: and for because I have heard, read

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and somewhat experimented the craft and subtlety of the French, I cannot but suspect that these offers are even like to the wolf's offers ; and as you wrote very well, *timeo Danaos et dona ferentes . . .* Will you see some experience of the truth thereof ? ” Wotton was unaware that his young Queen had already drawn this very conclusion for herself.

After a hearty outburst against all foreigners, who were obtuse when they were not full of diabolic machinations, the good doctor concluded with a plea to Cecil to stand firm for England at all costs, no matter how long the treaty was delayed. This was sheer patriotic self-sacrifice, for the writer was as anxious to get away from France on the grounds of ill-health as were his Spanish colleagues for reasons of expense and political troubles at home. “ This journey hath much weakened me. I assure you, I am even done, and not able to sustain labour any more ; especially in winter. And it is no wonder ; for within these four months (if I live so long) I shall enter into my great climacteric year ; which the physicians say is the most dangerous year of all a man's life : but methinketh, that they should . . . add the year he dieth in, if he die not in that

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climacteric year." It was a poor Elizabethan who could not discover an antidote to his age's scientific ignorance in his own exuberant common sense.

The time drew near for the new conference, and nothing was certain save that it would probably end in a fiasco. Henry prepared to enter into it with increased respect for Elizabeth, but with no idea of how seriously she meant to insist on the restoration of Calais. Whilst Philip, unable to decide how much her candour concealed, fretted on the one hand lest she and Henry had struck a secret bargain to his disadvantage, and on the other lest her obstinacy over Calais should render the conclusion of peace and his return to Spain impossible. All this vexation was so unnecessary. If only the woman would make up her mind to marry him he would have the French eating out of his hand and ready to accept any terms he cared to give them for the sake of a quick peace. He wrote to ask Feria if there was any chance of hurrying up Elizabeth's answer to his proposal, but the ambassador cautioned him in the most emphatic terms against pestering her with too many questions at once : they would only fluster her and make her angry.

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Meantime Elizabeth and Cecil had been scanning their maps, adding up columns of figures, conferring with their military and naval advisers, and had arrived at the conclusion that Calais was not worth having. Cities situated on foreign soil were of too little value, they decided, to justify the enormous and unending expense of defending them. A principle was thus established to which Elizabeth was to cling throughout her reign, even when her generals and admirals raved in disappointed fury at what seemed to them abject surrender of their country's prestige.

The decision was kept secret for the time being, however. The English commissioners were publicly instructed to demand the return of the town as the necessary preliminary to any agreement; privately they were told not to break up the conference on this point, but to obtain the maximum compensations they could before giving way. To assist her delegates in their bargaining, Elizabeth transmitted to Philip, by way of Feria, a meaning hint that whatever he could wrest out of the French for her might in the course of time become his as well.

CHAPTER X

THE QUEEN ANSWERS TWICE

THE conference began to assemble at the beginning of February in an uproar which grew steadily worse. The English delegates complained that they had been lodged both uncomfortably and inconveniently outside the town, and a house belonging to the Bishop of Cambrai was hastily put at their disposal. This in turn proved to be “nothing in the world but bare walls,” the Lord Chamberlain wrote huffily, and he was forced to tarry at Cambrai in order to provide himself and his train with the necessary furniture. When he was finally installed, he found living in the crowded village, suddenly lifted from insignificance to eminence, so dear that he complained to Cecil “there is no day that I escape under £10 a day, and sometimes more, besides rewards to minstrels and others.”

Howard had hardly time to unpack before the Duke of Alba, head of Philip’s delegation, hurried to see him, and under the pretext of extending a polite welcome tried to sound him

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about his instructions. Thereupon the French, who missed nothing, at once had themselves invited to meet the English Commissioners at the house of the Duchess of Lorraine, who throughout played the part of hostess to the Conference, and the Constable of France, their leader, even cornered Howard in church the Sunday after his arrival to see what could be arranged by private conversation in advance of the plenary sessions.

Neither side obtained much satisfaction. Philip told Feria in deep disgust that, so far as he could learn, the pigheaded English were not prepared to shift an inch from the position they had taken up at Cercamps three months before. "My people," he wrote, "found them all as firm about Calais as ever, and Howard and his colleagues said that they had no other instructions about Calais, or anything else than they had before and consequently my people were in fear of a rupture. I do not know whether these English are trying to deceive us here, or have deceived you in saying that they have an open commission about Calais. The French are hasty as the devil, and so I fear the worst for me as I can hold out no longer."

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Unfortunately, Feria knew no more than his King. It was obvious that Elizabeth had told him one thing and that her commissioners had told Philip another. He went to the Palace and tried to impress on the Queen how serious the situation was—for England. She declined to be impressed. He tried to show her that she was in no position to continue the struggle for Calais. She answered haughtily that “her subjects were not so poor that money and arms could not be got, and she knew what soldiers she had.” Though the astute Feria suspected that she was now resigned to the loss of Calais, he had no means of calling her bluff, if bluff it was, and until he could, his friends at Cateau-Cambrésis were doomed to grope in a fog. He led the conversation round to their common hatred of France, and when he judged her to be in the proper mood he suggested that, since they were allies and in such good accord, she ought to show him the instructions she had given to her commissioners, explaining that if Philip knew definitely what she wanted it would greatly assist him to get it for her.

She replied that the instructions had not yet been drawn up. Feria did not believe her (he was right: the instructions had in fact gone

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off several days before) but said smoothly that "as her Majesty had deigned to hear me so graciously, and seeing the good understanding that existed in the matter between her commissioners and those of your Majesty, I ventured to ask that I might be allowed to be present when it was discussed in the Council. The members were reported to be prudent, and I knew that she was as prudent as all of them put together, but still as I was acquainted with foreign affairs . . . it might be of some service to her Majesty to hear me in the discussion." The thought suggested itself that if he were allowed to be present at the Council's deliberations he stood a good chance of persuading them, or at least embarrassing them, into modifying their demands. Elizabeth, apparently unable to resist the tribute to her prudence from the man who had so often told his King she had none, "replied that she would do so with pleasure and would show me the instructions that were to be sent to the commissioners."

She must have forgotten her promise, for when he presently reminded her of it he was told that the document had already been sent. Less amiably than before he asked to see a

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copy of it. The request was granted, but too late to be of much assistance to him. Moreover it occurred to him as he read it that a dual set of instructions might have been issued, one for his perusal and another for the guidance of Howard and his colleagues. It was a shrewd surmise which could not, unfortunately, be verified unless Elizabeth and Cecil confessed their own duplicity. Feria had to wait on the event to find out the truth.

In the meantime Philip floundered on in the dark, spending his shrinking income on an unnecessary Flemish establishment, and suffering from acute homesickness every time a courier arrived from Spain to tell him how much he was needed there. His position was in every way unhappy. Unless he withdrew his proposal of marriage he was compelled to stand by Elizabeth, no matter how sorely she tried him, whereas she was free to do as she pleased until she accepted or rejected his offer.

Not content with driving him frantic by her obstinacy over the peace terms, she was taking advantage of his dilemma to run generally counter to his wishes everywhere. The separate negotiations with France were merely one example of the privileges she allowed herself.

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Had he treated her in any such fashion she would, he knew well, have shrivelled Feria's ears with maledictions on lying and treacherous friends. The examples of her perversity were multiplied in every letter from England. To add to his embarrassments alarming reports were now beginning to trickle in that she was disturbing the peace of Europe by secret encouragement of Protestant discontent amongst her Catholic neighbours.

Philip had expected that the offer of his hand would have induced her, at the very least, to cut short the Reform movement in England, but it appeared to have had no influence whatever, either in delaying or accelerating the outrageous changes which Feria reported with increasing rancour and dismay. Slowly, in crab-like movement, amidst much discussion, the English Church was being transformed, and the Queen did nothing except suppress occasionally the fanatics on either wing. Unless something drastic were done, and soon, England would be completely sunk in heresy.

That in itself was serious enough, but Philip now learned that Elizabeth's activities were not confined within her own borders. Evidence

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was piling up from France, Scotland, the Netherlands, even distant Austria, that she was busily cultivating the seeds of heterodoxy wherever there were enough Protestants to make trouble for their Catholic rulers. Practical considerations might, perhaps, have reconciled Philip to internal religious dissensions in France or Scotland, since they added to Henry II's troubles, but heresy was like a contagious disease which no quarantine could keep from spreading. Even wholesale extermination of the sufferers was unable to stamp it out, as he knew from experience. If Elizabeth strewed the germs in enemy countries they were certain to pass over into the Netherlands and swell the epidemic that already raged there ; they might even inflame the comparatively small plague spot in Spain. Philip, bound on principle to unsheathe a ready sword against all heresy, dared not at the moment even reprimand Elizabeth too harshly for giving aid and support to heretics, and was compelled to accept with meekness the Pope's upbraiding for his failure to do his duty.

His proposal had also placed him in an awkward situation with his Austrian relatives. It was he who had originally encouraged the

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Emperor to offer one of the Archdukes to Elizabeth, with a promise to throw his influence in favour of whichever of the two was selected. Maximilian, filled with great expectations, had expressed the deepest gratitude for the Spanish King's kind interest in his needy cousins. Now the Emperor was annoyed, and with justification. His sons had been elbowed out of the way by their powerful relation, and Austria exposed without ceremony to expense, rebuff and shattered hopes. Philip felt the estrangement keenly. If Elizabeth accepted him he would make it up to his cousins in some other way ; if she refused him he could again enthusiastically offer either Ferdinand or Charles in his place. But there was nothing he could do to end the unpleasantness until she sent him her definite answer.

It was a source of further irritation that while he was compelled, for reasons of tact and on Feria's advice, to refrain from urging his suit, no such considerations prevented the French from trying to procure its failure. He was not surprised when his agents at Cateau-Cambrésis warned him of the furtive colloquies which Henry's commissioners were forever contriving with the members of the

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English delegation, but he would have been shocked and horrified had he known the manner, as he suspected the matter, of these conversations.

During the meeting in church between Howard and Montmorenci, for instance, the Constable leaned over and whispered confidentially to the Chamberlain a wish, which Howard of course repeated to Elizabeth, "that if his master's wife were dead, your Majesty were his wife." Since, however, Catherine de Medici was very much alive and in good health, the Constable hastened to cover his apparent indiscretion by adding that of course this was impossible, since the English Queen was rumoured to be already engaged in Germany or Italy. Howard took no notice either of Montmorenci's sinister hint nor made any attempt to appease his curiosity about Elizabeth's matrimonial intentions, but coolly inquired why, if Henry felt so strongly drawn to her, he persisted in denying her Calais "against both right and reason." Neither cared to pursue the other's train of thought further, so the subject was temporarily dropped and both turned, presumably, to reveries more suited to the atmosphere of a house of worship.

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Henry's expedients were as inexhaustible as the contents of a magician's bag. One after another he drew them out, dangled them before the eyes of the commissioners, and left them about for further inspection. His crowning scheme was no less than a masterpiece, for it resolved at one stroke all outstanding difficulties between himself and Elizabeth over the succession, Calais and her marriage. In substance it resembled his earlier offer to waive Mary Stuart's claim to the English throne if Elizabeth would yield on Calais, or if she would promise not to marry out of her kingdom, but its form and scope were greatly elaborated.

Henry now proposed that the whole Calais question should be postponed to the future. Some day Elizabeth would, presumably, marry and have a son. In all probability Mary Stuart would, given time, produce a daughter. These two infants, according to Henry's plan, were to be betrothed as soon as the second of them was born. When they arrived at sufficient age they would marry and in turn produce a son of their own. And to that hypothetical infant, great-grandchild to Henry and grandchild to Elizabeth, Calais should be

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given in perpetuity, and everybody would be happy in a world forever at peace.

Many people thought it an excellent plan, but in Elizabeth's eyes it possessed one great drawback : it would only come into operation in the indefinite future and it was not her habit to look so far ahead. She may also have had an opinion of her own on the rumour, just beginning to be circulated, that she could never have children. Whatever the cause, the offer, to Spain's relief, came to nothing.

Henry's devices for delay were not only upsetting Philip's peace of mind, but injuring his dignity as well. While the French intrigued against him the polite world, including some of his best friends, laughed at his helplessness. The Duchess of Lorraine gave a hunting party at Cateau-Cambrésis early in February, to which she invited Lord William Howard, the Prince of Orange, one of the Spanish commissioners, and a high-born Austrian lady, the Duchess of Arenburg. The talk at once began to revolve round Philip and the Queen of England, and the members of the party appeared to find his situation highly comic. Both ladies dutifully hoped that Elizabeth would accept him, but were disloyally amused

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when Howard inquired quizzically, “Why, what should my mistress do with a husband that should be ever from her? Is that the way . . . to get . . . children?” The ladies granted that it was not, but laughingly urged that Philip’s previous record should not be held against him: Mary “was too old,” and not very alluring, they urged in his defence, while her sister was sufficiently attractive to warrant the hope that his Majesty, who, as everybody suspected was already enamoured of her, would take his marital duties more seriously.

How much of this particular conversation was reported to the King is uncertain, although it must be remembered that it was the duty of two of the party, the Prince of Orange and the Duchess of Arenburg, to report any inklings of English sentiment that came to their ears. It was certainly impossible that he should have remained altogether deaf to the echoes from the vast whispering gallery which encircled the courts of Europe.

Even Philip’s exemplary patience was beginning to show signs of wear. He knew that he had done everything possible to save Elizabeth from ruin and wean her from sin, but she was apparently incorrigible. After much agony

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of spirit he had brought himself to offer her the highest honour in his power, and instead of giving his proposal the prompt and serious attention it deserved, she had kept him in doubt for a month, subjecting him in the meanwhile to every torment of doubt and delay that perversity could invent. Her encouragement of other suitors was an offence against his dignity and her own modesty. She had played fast and loose with him over the treaty, and postponed the conclusion of the peace he yearned for. The news that Feria sent of her conduct at home, and especially with regard to the new schismatic church which she and her Parliament were establishing, indicated that things were likely to become worse rather than better.

There was nothing for it but to take decisive action, which he did in his own manner. On February 10th, exactly a month after his letter of proposal, he wrote urging Feria to continue to exert himself on behalf of peace and Catholicism as he had heretofore, but if he found her continuing in her present course he "had better consider whether it will not be well to press the Queen by saying that if this change is made, all idea of my marriage with her must be broken off . . ."

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This was in no way an order. The last thing that Philip wanted was to be hasty. He was merely, he explained, entrusting this weapon to Feria's discretion, should occasion for its use arise. "Of course you will be best able to judge if this can be taken advantage of, and if so when, where, and in what manner, as you are on the spot and probably have some further knowledge of the Queen's feelings. I therefore entrust this matter to your prudence, tact, and experience, leaving you to proceed how and when you think according to the humour of the Queen." Only as a last resort, in "the service of our Lord and the welfare of His religion," was Elizabeth to be threatened with a withdrawal of the proposal.

For once Feria took his instructions quite literally. Another month passed before he availed himself of his King's "recommendation." He continued to be the kind and solicitous older friend, to point out to Elizabeth the evil intentions of the French, the menace of Mary Stuart, the danger to her soul in affiliating herself with Protestants, the wickedness of her councillors, the value of Philip's friendship and the greatness of his virtues.

In accordance with his previous advice to

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the King, however, he thought it better not to stress Spain's other dissatisfactions or use Philip's threat until the treaty had been concluded, and he took every opportunity to soften her obstinacy with regard to Calais. Meeting with no success he put forward Spain's new formula for a settlement, which was to submit the matter to arbitration. The umpire was, of course, to be the King of Spain. Since neither France nor England would allow the other's claim to the disputed town, why not deliver it over to Philip to hold until he should have examined thoroughly and impartially the claims of both sides? The ambassador was naturally exasperated when Elizabeth joined with Henry in rejecting this simple solution of the difficulty.

When, in addition, she finally appeared ready to sanction the act making her Head of the Church, which he had for many weeks implored her to veto, it seemed that the time had at last come when he must have a show-down with her on all outstanding questions, Calais, religion and marriage. He was fortified in this belief by the conviction that Elizabeth would have to surrender the disputed city at the conference, no matter what she said for public

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consumption. Hence there was less risk in pressing her than there would have been a month ago, when it seemed improbable that she would ever give way on that point. Early in March he asked for a private audience, and as soon as they were alone began to unfold the list of Spain's grievances.

He could not have selected a worse moment. Elizabeth was suffering from a bad cold and the Council had just been badgering her, with the result that she was in a villainous temper. Nothing in the world interested her at that moment less than Calais or religion. Feria's opening was therefore particularly unfortunate. It was merely a mild remonstrance against the previous day's discussion in Parliament over the Act of Supremacy, but the Queen had already heard from both sets of extremists in her Council all that there was to be said on this subject. Before the ambassador was even sufficiently warmed up to take the offensive she turned on him with the curt announcement that he was wasting his breath: she could not marry Philip, since evidently he regarded her as a heretic, and she intended to do nothing more about it.

Feria was staggered. In all his experience

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with Elizabeth he had never yet known her to use a direct expression with regard to anything, and there was certainly no mistaking the meaning of what she had just told him. "I begged her to tell me the cause of so great a change since I had last discussed the subject with her but she did not enlighten me."

He thought quickly. This outburst must have been provoked partly by the Council, partly, perhaps, by some previous mistake in tactics on his part. His first task was obviously to soothe her ruffled feelings. Someone, he told her sympathetically, had disturbed and excited her over nothing. He himself, though most uncompromising in these matters, "did not consider she was heretical." He had every faith in her and did not believe for a moment "that she would sanction the things which were being discussed in Parliament." A sensible young woman, such as he knew her to be, must realise that a change of religion would mean ruin and estrangement from her protector because "your Majesty would not separate from the union of the Church for all the kingdoms of the earth."

He realised his error as soon as he had made it, for Elizabeth interrupted him with the

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sarcastic observation that Philip seemed vastly more interested in his church than he did in her.

Feria began to see light. He remembered that the woman before him was young, and vain, with an insatiable appetite for personal flattery. Here, then, was the sore spot whose existence he had suspected. “These heretics and the devil that prompts them are so careful to leave no stone unturned to compass their ends, that no doubt they have persuaded her that your Majesty wishes to marry her for religious objects alone, and so she kept repeating to me that she was heretical and consequently could not marry your Majesty.” This to the man who had proposed with the words, “I cannot lose sight of the enormous importance of such a match to Christianity and the preservation of religion. . . .”

The ambassador unbent and retracted—“I did not want to be all rigour”—and told her that she greatly underestimated the depth of Philip’s passion for her. Undoubtedly Philip was firmly attached to his faith, but that was by no means the only, or the principal, reason for wanting to marry her; after all “men did more for a woman than for anything else.”

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Exactly how Feria expected to reconcile the implication in this remark with his instructions he did not stop to reflect, wisely judging it safer, when confronted with an angry woman, to pacify her first and reason with her afterwards.

The roots of Elizabeth's wrath went deeper than he thought. She was not to be propitiated by mere flattery and was altogether disinclined to listen to a lecture. She cut short Feria's vicarious wooing and told him irritably that she had no intention of taking the title of Supreme Head of the Church, to which he and his master objected. But the avarice of the Roman clergy was impoverishing her people and reducing her income, and she meant to stop it henceforward by suppressing their tithes. "So much money was taken out of the country for the Pope every year," she declared flatly, "that she must put an end to it, and that the Bishops were lazy poltroons."

Feria was so scandalised that he forgot his determination to be tactful and replied with heat "that the poltroons were the preachers that she listened to and that it added little to her honour, and was a great scandal that so many rogues should come from Germany and

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get into the pulpit before her and great congregations . . . without being learned or worthy to be listened to."

He immediately regretted his vehemence and looked about quickly for a way to make amends. Before the right words occurred to him, however, he was interrupted. Sir Francis Knollys came in and said that supper was ready. Feria glared at him: this was "a new thing" since the hour for supper was yet a long way off, and he suspected that this was another plot, "arranged by those who are working this wickedness, for there is nothing that annoys them more than that I should speak to her." There was nothing to do, however, but go, which he did, saying reproachfully to the Queen as he went "that she was not the Elizabeth that I knew, and that I was very dissatisfied with what I had heard."

When he next asked for an audience she answered with polite regret that she was not well, one of the few things she told him that he ever believed. It was several days before she sent him word that she was again able to receive him. He went to the Palace determined to keep a firm hold on his tongue and temper. Save for the occasions when she

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irritated him he still thought the match an excellent idea ; he would keep cool, subordinate everything to the marriage, and leave it to God and Philip to manage her once the principal object was achieved.

This time he saw the Queen Elizabeth that he knew, but was even less satisfied with her than before. She was all smiles : apparently her brief respite from public business had made her feel as if she had not a care in the world. She inquired cordially after Feria's news and volunteered the information that her own was in every way satisfactory, including that from France. The ambassador would have given a good deal to know what lay behind her air of content, but refrained from asking.

When he finally brought up the matter of the marriage Elizabeth's mood was as playful as it had been caustic a few days before. She treated the proposal as a joke and talked of his Catholic Majesty as if he had been a clown in whose performance she found a childish delight. She sketched his person in a verbal picture which reduced the ambassador to scandalised silence. His fussy personal habits, his precise little ways, his Castilian narrow-mindedness, all emerged under the deft strokes

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of her caricature. She accused him of marrying her out of a sense of duty and intimated that she considered herself worthy of a more romantic devotion. If she ever gave serious thought to marriage she would certainly not choose a husband who would always be running off and deserting her. "This," according to Feria, "she said with great laughter as if she could read my secret thoughts." In any event, she reminded him, she had no desire to marry, as she had told him from the very first day.

Feria tried to bring her back to his own ground of reasonable argument, but the one valid objection he was able to extract was her unwillingness to admit the Pope's power by asking for his dispensation to marry her brother-in-law, as Philip expected her to do. This would be equivalent to casting a doubt on her own legitimacy, which was scarcely to be expected of anybody.

Feria gave it up. As he confided to the Bishop of Aquila, who at once made a long memorandum of his superior's remarks, he had by this time come to the conclusion that she was likely to refuse Philip, and he therefore "so turned the conversation as not to take her

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remarks as an answer at all . . . although it must be borne in mind " that if he " feigned not to take the answer she is not likely to reply in any other way." What disturbed him more than anything save the fact of the refusal itself was that a number of Elizabeth's gibes at Philip were based on the contents of his secret correspondence with the King. " She is so well informed," he told de Quadra, " that it looks as if she had seen his Majesty's letters. This should be taken good note of." He again became uneasy about the efficiency of the Spanish couriers.

Elizabeth and the ambassador had formally agreed that Philip was not to be informed of the contents of their first talk, and in no event to be told that his proposal had been definitively refused. Feria, however, seemed to have felt himself bound by a higher duty than his promise to the young Queen. For de Quadra's memorandum states that on March 19th, between the two conversations, the Count " seeing what sort of answer she was going to give . . . left it over for another day, in order to advise your Majesty in the meanwhile of what was going on and await instructions . . . "

CHAPTER XI

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IT was March 23rd, and Philip still waited for the result of his qualified ultimatum of February 10th. A month and more had gone by since he had strengthened Feria's hand with the threat to break off the marriage, and the King did not yet know whether it had been used and, if so, with what effect. The ambassador had recently sent him an up-to-date account of the situation in England by de Quadra, who confirmed his superior's fears that things were rapidly growing worse. The Count and the Bishop agreed that the country was daily cutting further adrift from Rome, and that there was no visible prospect of its submitting to the loss of Calais, but neither was able to say whether Elizabeth intended to accept him or not. Nothing was certain save that the present was gloomy, the future ominous, and Spain further off than ever.

Phrases from the ambassador's early letters began to recur with increasing frequency to Philip's mind. Might not Feria have been

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right, after all, in his belief that coercion was a better policy than conciliation in dealing with the English? If only these stringent methods did not involve jeopardy to the peace conference and the risk of Elizabeth scurrying to the French for protection . . . how was one to be indulgent and stern simultaneously, encourage the English to remain peaceful at the same time that one threatened them with war? The King pondered this dilemma, finally made up his mind that something new had to be tried, summoned a secretary and began to dictate a letter to Feria.

Somehow decision lost its vigour when it was expressed in words. Philip as usual dreaded action more than he desired it. He thanked the ambassador for his prudence and moderation, and urged him to continue the practice of these virtues. The letter had begun with the intention of inaugurating a new policy which would bring the English to their knees; instead it ordered that everything be done to avoid revolution or disturbance, which, the King feared, might result "from the Catholics resisting the carrying out of the new decisions or from the discontent that is shown at some of the Queen's pro-

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ceedings and mode of government, or again by the incitement of the French." In other words, even his loyal Catholic adherents in England should be frowned upon if peace could be better arrived at in that way.

The first pages of the letter simply boiled down in the end to a request that Feria "use all his efforts to smooth matters down as much as possible and use every means that the Queen should not proceed so rigorously," and "by all fair words, arguments and compliments" that might seem efficacious and fitting "keep in (her) good graces . . . and lead her to rely on my friendship implicitly." In no event should an occasion be presented for an appeal to the French. It seemed to Philip "most unlikely that she should trust people who have the claim they have on her kingdom and are ever waiting for a chance to try and put her from it," but Elizabeth's conduct had hitherto shown so singular a lack of discrimination between her friends and her enemies that the advice did not strike the writer as redundant. And again he repeated his "main end and aim," which he strewed through the letter at short and regular intervals: "to obstruct and impede, by every way, form, and means, any

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rupture between the Catholics and heretics in England." For if this happened Philip would either have to abandon Elizabeth and help the Catholics, or abandon the Catholics in order to preserve Elizabeth and the peace he so much wanted.

At this point Philip suddenly remembered his determination to embark on a more decisive course; Feria had had these counsels of caution from him before and unmistakably indicated that he was weary of them. The King without further delay went on to say what he had intended in the beginning :

" If in spite of all your efforts you cannot obviate a rupture between Catholics and heretics you must endeavour by all means to let me know at once the state of affairs and I will instruct you how you are then to proceed. If, however, a disturbance happen so suddenly that you have no time to consult me, you will mediate and try to pacify without declaring yourself for either party until you have advised me and received my reply, but if you see the Catholic side strong and firmly established and the heretics weak, you will not fail secretly to favour the former and supply them underhandedly with money, whilst on the other

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hand you will give fair words to the heretics to put them off their guard and prevent them from calling in the French."

For the execution of this cunning design money was, of course, necessary. Philip wrote that he was sending 40,000 ducats in two instalments, since he could not raise the entire sum at once. He impressed on Feria, who had already impressed the same fact on him earlier, that "it will be well not to let it be known there that you have any more money than is necessary, as it may arouse suspicion and discontent, and this would be inconvenient." The ambassador might spend the whole or part of the sum at his discretion, either on gaining friends or succouring the Catholics, but preferably on keeping the peace between the two religious parties—"the importance of which is so great that I cannot be satisfied without repeating it so many times."

The lapse into the earlier manner was only momentary. Philip at once proceeded to sketch in the background of his audacious scheme.

A report had gained currency, he explained, that he was about to embark from Flanders immediately. Since it was undesirable that

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the public should believe this rumour, an official denial had been published, coupled with a statement that the King would not sail for Spain before the arrival of his son, Don Carlos, for his marriage with Henry's daughter, Elizabeth, on the conclusion of peace. Feria was ordered to spread the same tale in England, so as to encourage the Catholics to believe that their protector was not planning to desert them. But the ambassador was not to take the denial literally. It was merely a curtain behind which plans might be drawn and "money be got to fit out a fleet in a short time, so that it may be ready to carry men over to England if required." This had not yet been done for fear of arousing suspicion, but the order for the ships had already been placed. Moreover "men will also be got ready here, so that if it should be necessary they can be sent to the place where they may be wanted."

The dictation was interrupted at this point by the arrival of a courier—"whilst this was being written your letter of the 19th instant arrived." The transit from London had taken the remarkably short time of three days.

The King opened the letter at once and read it. The contents were mere variations of

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the old themes : more troubles with the English councillors, fresh ill-treatment of his Flemish merchants, and intensified Protestant activity in Parliament, at which Philip was as always "much pained." The same ills as before, merely aggravated. And no word about the one remedy which promised a cure, Elizabeth's answer to his proposal. . . .

But, turning the page, he found it, phrased in Feria's characteristic manner, without preface or embroidery, "She said . . . she could not marry your Majesty" Not only, it appeared, had Elizabeth rejected him, but in a bitterness of spirit and for reasons more disquieting if possible than the refusal itself.

Unlike Feria, who had declined to take Elizabeth's answer as final, the King at once threw up the sponge. An inner voice had told him all along that Elizabeth might, after all, not have him. It could not be explained : logic was overwhelmingly on his side ; in her place he would have acted differently. But he was man enough to face the truth. The only thing that mattered now was that she should not think that her refusal had offended him and forfeited his friendship. If she believed that,

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there was no telling what she would do. She might in panic turn to the French. . . .

The King re-read what he had already dictated, to see if it required amendment in the light of what he had just learned. But he could find nothing—on the contrary his plans now seemed to have been inspired by a kind of premonition. There was no alteration to make ; the ambassador was merely enjoined to preserve a greater caution, a more unsleeping vigilance, than before.

The letter was then laid aside for the moment, and the secretary ordered to take another. The second one, though addressed to Feria, was written expressly to be shown to the Queen. It carried Philip's earnest assurance that he was not offended with her answer, that if she thought their common ideals could be realised outside marriage he was content to accept her decision, and that he would forever remain her friend and brother.

All this the King amplified when he resumed the original letter, and urged Feria to keep at Elizabeth until she was convinced that “ I am quite satisfied with whatever pleases her, with such complimentary words and offers of service as you may see advisable and in substantial

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accord with the contents of the (enclosed) letter."

Philip then put the matter out of his mind and added a postscript of such importance that he wrote it with his own hand, "It will be well to delay as much as possible the payment of the pensions except those most necessary for the success of our present affairs, so that this money now sent may go as far as possible, for although the sum may not be large, in my present circumstances I shall feel the want of it, but am anxious to do nothing that shall stand in the way of the arrangement of my business."

Meantime an incident was taking place in London which had the effect of still further souring Feria's disposition while he waited for the answer to his letter of the 19th. The more extreme religious leaders on both sides had for some time felt that the air might be cleared if the best Catholic and Protestant theologians could be got together in a formal religious dispute. Feria himself enthusiastically favoured the idea: he had no doubt that if the Church's spokesmen could be heard publicly, heresy would be dissipated from the minds of the ill-

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informed. All he asked was fair play. "I have been pleased to bring the matter to this point, and am now trying to devise means to avoid any trick or subtlety in the form of the dispute, which the heretics may take advantage of afterwards. The best way that has occurred is that the dispute should be in Latin and in writing and that each disputant should sign what he says. The Queen had at first consented to this but afterwards they sent to the Catholics to say that the dispute was to be in vulgar English, verbal and in Parliament, which would be very bad." The Catholics naturally preferred to argue in the traditional language of the Church, in which they were better instructed than their rivals, while written orations, prepared in the calm of the study with the opportunity of reference to the authorities, were more likely to tell in their favour than the rough and tumble of impromptu debate.

But the officials in discharge of the dispute, all Protestants, laid down precisely the conditions to which Feria objected. He went again to see the Queen, who received him in a very good humour, but refused point blank his request for a reversal of the terms. Everything was already settled, she told him, and the

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Catholic orators were to get on with it as best they could. Feria's hopes of the debate were further diminished when he found that the overseer and umpire of the arrangements was to be the arch-heretic Nicholas Bacon.

The Catholic champions were only notified of the change in the rules on the evening of Friday, March 30th. They were ordered to assemble on the next day in the choir of Westminster Abbey, unrehearsed, for the great performance.

The affair developed along lines familiar to students of American criminal practice. So many objections to the procedure were entered on both sides that no progress could be made on the issues themselves. Three questions had been set : (1) Whether the celebration of the divine offices and the administration of the sacraments should be in the vulgar tongue ; (2) Whether a national synod could institute new symbols and rites and alter those in use ; (3) Whether it could be proved from Holy Writ that the Mass is a sacrifice for the living and the dead.

The Catholics were forbidden to touch upon the first article. They were compelled to submit their arguments on the second in writing, and curtly directed to confirm it regard-

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less of its truth or their own convictions, despite previous promises to the contrary. All refused but one, whereupon the others were arrested and thrown into prison, their property sequestered and their dignities taken from them. There is no record that the third question was ever argued at all.

In these circumstances Feria could of course see little hope of bringing the light of truth to the benighted island, or of advancing the prosperity of his religious cause while its officers lay confined in dungeons. The spirit of fair play seemed totally absent from his enemies' breasts.

The result of the debate was as pleasing to the Protestants as it was hateful to the ambassador. Wherever he turned he heard their jubilant crows and exultant prophecies. John Jewel wrote to Peter Martyr concerning various Catholic dignitaries, some of whom were involved in the great dispute: ". . . Brooks, Bishop of Gloucester, a beast of most impure life, and yet more impure conscience, a short time before his death exclaimed in a most woeful manner, that he was now condemned by his own judgment. Your renowned (antagonist) Smith, the patron of chastity, has been taken

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in adultery, and on that account is ordered to retire from the theological chair, by a new practice, and without a precedent, as the like was never done in Mary's time. Bruerne, too, has been compelled, for a similar offence, only far more flagitious, to relinquish his professorship of Hebrew. I write nothing about Marshal, for fear of defiling my paper . . ." All these miscreants and their like, rejoiced the eminent preacher, were anticipating the punishment in this life to which they were already doomed in the next. One might predict with confidence that the God of Moses, Luther and Calvin would of a certainty soon reign in England.

When Philip's two letters of the 23rd arrived Feria himself was beginning to wonder whether he had not too lightly laid aside his own early fire and sword theory. He noted with satisfaction that the earlier and longer of the King's two letters hinted at similar speculations in Brussels. But the instructions for the moment clearly were to take no unfriendly action until all other means had been tried—even speak no unfriendly word before the chaos of the peace conference had been satisfactorily resolved.

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So he went at once to see Elizabeth, showed her the second of his letters, and conveyed Philip's supplementary assurance that the King accepted her answer in a spirit of gentlemanly resignation to a lady's will and harboured no shadow of resentment against her.

Elizabeth was outwardly convinced but inwardly incredulous. She did not think that she had exactly broken Philip's heart, but it scarcely seemed possible that any man, least of all a Spaniard, should suffer a lady's rejection without some wound to his pride. She had never entirely trusted Philip to stand unflinchingly behind her in the negotiations with France, and now she trusted him less than ever. Pique would thenceforth be added to homesickness and expense as a further inducement to wash his hands of the whole affair, including herself and England's claims, as quickly as possible. She had also, by some means best known to herself, got wind of the naval preparations in the Scheldt. If Philip cherished a hidden animosity towards her it must somehow be kept inactive, at least until the peace was concluded.

She handed the King's letter back to Feria with an air of wistful regret that things had

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not turned out otherwise. Philip was so understanding, so magnanimous. She admired him more than any other living man, with a respect that was akin to love. She asked the ambassador to tell Philip how happy it made her to remember that she would in any event always remain his good and true sister, and vowed that her friendship for him was so deep and unshakable that the additional bond of marriage would have been superfluous. Feria bowed his acknowledgment. He was quite sure, he replied, that the King would be touched by her words and content with her assurances. He promised to transmit both to him immediately.

But Elizabeth remained doubtful. Something in Feria's cool suavity troubled her. She was certain that he had concealed more of Philip's real thoughts than he had communicated. The device of two letters was not entirely unknown to her. The moment obviously called for a concrete gesture which would restore Philip's confidence in her good intentions.

She shuffled her pack of suitors and out came again the Archduke Ferdinand. She was, it seemed, now ready to marry, and very favour-

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ably disposed towards Philip's cousin. She had never thought of marrying—never would think of marrying—anybody who did not have Philip's entire approval.

The King was enormously pleased. Even Feria allowed himself a moment of optimism. He did not believe in Elizabeth's reform, but it was just possible that she was being chastened by necessity. She must have seen by now, he reflected, that she would have to give up Calais in any event, and that far more serious consequences would follow unless she exerted herself to retain Philip's support. Furthermore the proposition was a better one from Spain's point of view than it had appeared when it was first brought up some months earlier, for the ambassador had come to believe that there was something in the rumour that Elizabeth could never have children. If that was true, Ferdinand, as husband of a sickly Queen, might one day be King in his own right and rule England as a dependency of Spain.

An embassy was at once fitted up in Vienna and ordered to proceed to London, bearing handsome gifts and glittering promises. Ferdinand was removed from his prayers and

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installed on a dais, where a series of the best portrait-painters in the Empire had their will with him. A royal committee examined the results, and the chosen portrait, magnificently framed, was packed and sent off to England in charge of the noble baron at the head of the Austrian delegation. The sound of wedding bells could be distinctly heard throughout the provinces of the Empire, nuptial ballads were composed, and joint portraits of the happy couple posted in the windows of the more fashionable shops. Even the Pope relaxed in his hostility to Anne Boleyn's daughter and returned absent-minded answers to Henry II's outpourings against the iniquity of a marriage between a Catholic prince and a heretic queen.

The English themselves were taken in. The Catholics were jubilant, the Protestant upper classes resigned. Cecil admitted that Elizabeth was probably too deeply committed to back out. His fellow Protestants on the Council, less disingenuous, were already planning their own comfortable futures under the new Consort. The populace raged. An epidemic of lampoons against the marriage broke out, so violent that many of the authors were rounded up and thrown into prison. Only Henry II,

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somewhat accustomed to the Queen's vagaries, still retained some small hope that Ferdinand would never be allowed to come to England, but how small that hope was could be read in the bookmakers' rapidly shortening odds.

The excitement was too intense to last long. Feria and a curious item of gossip were jointly responsible for the cold water which presently began to trickle on the Catholic party's expectations. Elizabeth was seeing too much of her handsome Master of the Horse, young Lord Robert Dudley, ran these vague early rumours, and arranging to house him in the Palace. The evil-minded put the inevitable construction on their intimacy. The pessimistic wagged their heads and said that all the fuss about Ferdinand would come to nothing that Dudley had cast a spell on the Queen as soon as she dared she would openly proclaim her intention of marrying him. It was true that he already had a wife, poor Amy Robsart living deserted and almost friendless in bleak Kenilworth Castle, but divorce was not unknown and inconvenient people sometimes died.

For once Feria came to the aid of Elizabeth's reputation. He was shocked by the scandal,



LORD ROBERT DUDLEY

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but even more worried lest the Emperor and his son, who were men of narrow, even Puritanical, outlook, should get wind of this illicit affair between the Queen and her subject. As a man of the world he was bound to recognise that, whatever Elizabeth's private life, the young Archduke would be doing well for himself if he married her.

But this was a different matter from letting Elizabeth again wriggle out of a tight corner by means of a deceptive gesture. Let the Austrian negotiations go forward by all means, advised the Count, if there was any chance of something coming of them ; but he was strictly opposed to any concession being made before the nuptial knot was tied. And Elizabeth, realising that the enemy had penetrated her manœuvre, politely put aside the Archduke for use on later occasions.

She saw now that it was useless to insist on the return of Calais. Apart from the fact that it was not worth keeping, she knew that in the end Philip would grow weary of the fruitless wrangle and leave her alone to fight out the issue with Henry, which she was both unable and unwilling to do. She also knew that Henry, whatever treaty he agreed to, would at

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once dishonour his signature, leaving the ownership of Calais where it was before. Her real safety lay, not in the nominal ownership of the port, but in the fact that Spain would never dare permit its use as a possible base of aggression against the Netherlands ; Philip himself would tear up the treaty if the French began to mass troops on that border. Whoever held Calais, Henry's next step would be to invade England by way of Scotland rather than from across the Channel. While her commissioners deferred the conclusion of peace, she strengthened the defences on her northern frontier, secretly sent money to instigate rebellion against the French in Scotland, and fostered the belief amongst the Protestant lords in Edinburgh that she meant to marry the Earl of Arran and set him up as King in the place of Mary Stuart.

At last, with many defiances, many oaths that she would never yield, Elizabeth finally agreed to a treaty whereby Calais was to remain in the hands of the French for eight years, at the end of which time she was either to receive it back or 500,000 crowns in compensation. No one, including herself, seriously believed that the French would either give it up at the

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end of that period or pay the money, but she would have a strong diplomatic hold over them if they broke their promise. And for years Philip's failure to secure the town for her would give her a convenient stick to beat him with if he had a complaint against her on some other score.

It was Feria, very pleased with the state of affairs, who came to tell her the terms of the treaty, unaware that her own information had arrived in advance of his. At sight of him she flew into a fury. The surrender of Calais, she swore roundly, was not her doing ; had she been a man at the peace table instead of a poor weak woman confined to London, it would never have been taken from her. She damned her commissioners for their spinelessness and Henry for his rapacity. Philip, she conceded (for she was still uncertain of his feelings towards her and it seemed best to temporise), had been a loyal friend and had tried to do his best for her, but he had been deplorably weak—it was a great pity.

Feria was not taken in, and stood his ground bravely until dismissed. “She went on in this way but her anger was all pretended,” he wrote Philip on his return home, “and she is

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really very much pleased and her people as well." The King, however, must have forgotten this diagnosis, for, as Elizabeth's feminine cunning had foreseen, he meekly bowed his head under her subsequent reproaches whenever the subject of Calais was mentioned.

When the final version of the treaty came to be published it was found to contain a clause which had been kept secret as long as possible. Philip gave various reasons of dynasty and policy for agreeing to its inclusion, but others attributed its origin to his uncomfortable feeling that he never knew what Elizabeth would do next. At any rate the world learned what the diplomats had now suspected for some weeks—that it was not the lunatic Don Carlos but his father who was to cement the peace by marrying Henry II's daughter. His Catholic Majesty, having lost one Elizabeth, was preparing to console himself with another.

CHAPTER XII

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THE news of Philip's engagement provoked sharp differences of opinion. A perceptible note of censure runs through the letters of several neutral writers, who thought that he had acted badly in so suddenly jilting his young sister-in-law. Henry II rubbed his hands with delight at having outwitted his mischievous neighbour. The English masses were fiercely indignant at what they took to be a slight on their Queen. While Philip's proposal was hanging fire they had objected vigorously to its acceptance, but to have her spurned by a foreigner was quite another matter. They showed their displeasure by assaulting Spaniards in the streets and concocting ballads about Philip so obscene that the more influential of his subjects in London were moved to shocked protest. Philip's own circle in Brussels was, on the whole, glad to get the thing over one way or another, and inclined to believe that the marriage with the French princess was the beginning of a long period of peace. Only

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Philip himself did not know exactly how he felt about the somewhat abrupt alteration in his matrimonial plans.

The instigator of the proposal to the English Elizabeth was also of divided mind. On the one hand he was disappointed that his own scheme for the salvation of England had failed to materialise ; on the other he was glad to see Elizabeth's fast and loose conduct receive the punishment it deserved. It was poetic justice of a kind rarely met with outside the pages of romantic literature. Eager to see how she would take the news, he gathered together the despatches from Brussels and his understudy, de Quadra, now returned from his errand to Brussels, called his coach and drove to the Palace.

The Queen received him graciously, but kept him hanging about while she read some letters from Portugal which a delegation from that country had brought her. At one point she found difficulty with the language and asked the Spaniard to help her with her reading. He answered gravely, though he must have been curious about what business she could have with the country Philip was later to appropriate, that he was "no longer any good for a sec-

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retary," at which she flung him a slight smile whose meaning eluded him and proceeded without his assistance.

When she had finished she turned to him and asked if he had any recent letters from Philip. He replied in the affirmative, but added that he was in no condition to discuss their contents with her then, "as I was so angry and annoyed." She suggested that in that case he might leave the despatches from Brussels with her and go into the next room with the Portuguese to cool down : she would send for him presently.

Feria complied. In the next room he found various members of the Council, including that "pestilent knave" Cecil, who at once entered into conversation with him about the treaty, glibly insinuating that its deficiencies were entirely due to Spanish feebleness and that England had at all times been ready to go on with the war if Spain could have stood the pace. This was such utter nonsense that the ambassador grew angry and curtly advised the Secretary to tell it to the marines, or other gullible persons "who did not understand the state of affairs in England so well as I did."

The talk was cut short by the summons from the Queen. If Elizabeth was upset by the news

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in the letters, she concealed the fact extremely well. As the ambassador entered the room he saw her smiling. He was puzzled and unable to make out what her real feelings were, whether she was hurt, chagrined or resigned. From her manner and her first words one might even have judged her to be amused. She referred lightly to Philip's marriage, saying his name was a fortunate one, "and now and then giving little sighs which bordered upon laughter."

Feria brusquely overrode her pretences. He meant her to realise how serious her loss was, and that the fault lay entirely with her for shilly-shallying so long over a great opportunity which could never come again. Moreover, if he could make her accept the responsibility for the turn in affairs it would deprive her of an excuse for blaming Philip for the disaster that had overtaken her. "I told her that although I saw that this peace was a great boon to Christendom, I could not rejoice to see your Majesty married to anyone else but her, nor at her refusing to believe all my importunities and assurances of how desirable it would be for her to marry your Majesty."

But Elizabeth declined to take the blame. She retorted that "it was your Majesty's fault

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it had fallen through and not hers." She reminded the ambassador that she had never refused Philip in so many words; she had merely confided her scruples to Feria in the hope that he could help her to overcome them. Instead of giving her the time she needed, he had unwarrantably interpreted her doubts, quite natural ones in the circumstances, as a rejection. Furthermore he had lied to her, since he had written to the King of their discussions when he had promised not to do so. If he had kept this promise, she might, she implied, never have refused Philip at all.

Feria hotly contradicted this version of the case; it was unfair and disingenuous. "I told her she knew very well what the facts were, and that I had not taken a reply because I understood what kind of answer she would give me, and that in affairs of this importance between two such great Princes as your Majesty and her it was my duty, if I could not bring about an agreement, to give matters such a turn as to cause no anger or resentment on either side, and this I had tried to do, although in so doing I had leant more on her side than on your Majesty's, as she very well knew." The ambassador was as much hurt

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by the reflection on his diplomacy as annoyed by her affectation of obtuseness. Her last accusation, regarding the broken promise not to write to Philip of the rejection, he left unanswered in his excitement ; it also happened to be unanswerable.

Elizabeth soothed him by admitting the truth of what he said about himself and his own offices. No possible blame could attach to him ; she would make it clear to his master that his conduct throughout had been above reproach. If there was any fault it was Philip's, who had protested his love for her and then, without giving her a proper chance to make up her mind on so serious a matter, impetuously dropped her and rushed off to marry somebody else. She submitted that he "could not have been so much in love with her" as he had led her and Feria to believe, since he "had not had patience to wait four months for her." (The time was actually less : Philip's proposal had been sent on January 10th, and Feria's report of the present conversation is contained in a letter of April 11th.)

She went on to say "many things of the same sort," leaving Feria with the impression that though "she was not at all pleased at the decision

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adopted by your Majesty," her feelings were more of sorrow than of anger. This was, of course, according to her design : it would not have done at this stage to let Philip believe that a hopeless estrangement had arisen between them because of his engagement to the French princess. Her position now was analogous to his after her refusal in March. She could not resist letting Feria see the more cheerful side of her picture, however. Two or three of her Council, she told him brightly, would be " very glad at the news," but though pressed she refused to say who they were.

On the whole Feria was satisfied with his day's work. " She and all the rest of them," he assured Philip, " have been much grieved to see your Majesty and the King of France so united, and they greatly fear that this friendship may portend evil to them." They would be more likely to watch their step in future. The Queen and her Council might hope to deceive him into thinking that they were unperturbed by the peace and the French marriage, but the bluff was too transparent. " What they wanted was something very different from that and they were blind entirely to their real interests, and would now begin to

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understand that I had advised what was best for the service of the Queen and the welfare of the country. In short," he ended complacently, "I left them that day as bitter as gall."

Feria's account of the preceding interview was not the only reflection of Elizabeth's state of mind to reach Brussels. Various others (including one she probably read before it reached Philip) were brought to the notice of the King and his ministers, and caused them to wonder whether they had not been too hasty in concluding the bargain with Henry. A little more patience, a threat of the French marriage instead of a binding engagement, and Elizabeth might have capitulated. Some of the Spanish ministers tentatively discussed whether it was too late to back out—the advantages of the English alliance were so concrete, of the French so uncertain.

The perplexity in Brussels was vividly described by the Venetian ambassador, Tiepolo, in a letter to the Doge of April 23rd. It was now generally believed at court, he wrote, that "the Queen of England . . . is so dissatisfied and alarmed lest some evil befall her through this peace and alliance, that at present she would on any terms gladly persuade his

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Majesty to break the promise made to France, and to take her for wife." She had gone so far as to offer "through the medium of the Count de Feria . . . her acceptance of whatever conditions and compacts may please him, provided she become his wife." Feria's letter of the 11th had apparently suffered some strange sea-change in its passage from Tilbury to Antwerp.

Elizabeth's humility, Tiepolo went on, was producing a profound impression at Court, "where many persons incline towards this arrangement," since "the opportunity ought not to be lost for acquiring so great and noble a kingdom, most especially from the danger of its falling into other hands, which might cause the loss of these provinces [the Low Countries]." Objections to Elizabeth on the score of her religion were being overridden by a misquotation from Feria to the effect that "the Queen will turn Catholic" if Philip would now have her.

With regard to France, reported the Venetian further, the pro-English party were arguing "that the most Christian King ought with reason to be more content that his daughter should marry Don Carlos in preference to King Philip, as the children born of the Prince

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of Spain would succeed to all the Crowns and states which, should the Prince live, would not happen to those born of his Majesty." Carlos, as the eldest, would bar the way to any of his father's subsequent children, a point which had already been considered in Philip's proposal to Elizabeth. Furthermore, should Henry ever turn "unreasonable and choose to impede the welfare and grandeur of Spain they would better be able to wage war than heretobefore, because to King Philip's fortresses would be added those of England, so that he could dispose of them at his option."

Tiepolo's misconceptions were as fantastic as his errors of fact, but it is quite certain that the whole of his tale is not invention. And if any of it was true, then the vigorous re-appearance of an English faction at Philip's council table was the result of some artful stratagem which had its origin in Whitehall, for nothing in Feria's letter could have provoked so profound a belief in Elizabeth's sudden change of heart about the marriage with Philip.

The little King himself, torn between conflicting advice, did not know what to do. If he jilted Elizabeth of Valois he would be certain

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to offend France mortally ; if he let slip a possible chance of marrying Elizabeth of England, he stood to lose a kingdom. For a moment the fate of Europe appeared to hang in the balance.

But Philip lacked the nerve to gamble once more with uncertainties. It was safer to follow the orderly course laid out for him ; the consequences of deviating from it conjured up endless vistas of perilous decisions. Nor had he any assurance that if he disengaged himself from his new fiancée, his sister-in-law would not again keep him waiting in a torture of suspense. He elected to stand by his bargain with Henry, but as partial compensation to Elizabeth urged the Pope to withhold the excommunication which was hanging over her head, and gratuitously promised on her behalf that “on the conclusion of the peace the Queen of England will remain Catholic.”

Again Feria’s house was agitated with the bustle of preparation for moving : the ambassador was going home. It was a bare five months since he had arrived with the intention of remaining for the duration of Elizabeth’s reign. He was still convinced that her end

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was not far off, but he was tired of waiting for it. Everything had gone wrong—religion was lost, the country damned, the Queen impossible. It was becoming more and more irksome to flatter and placate a people whom he hoped soon to see in their proper place under Philip's heel, an achievement in which he intended to take a leading part. In addition he was naturally reluctant for the child whom his Countess expected in September to be born on heretic soil. His first petitions to be relieved had only evoked the King's entreaties to remain at his post until the peace was completed. Immediately that was settled the ambassador tried again, and this time Philip had graciously granted permission to hand his responsibilities over to his successor and return to Brussels.

It had been important, however, that his recall should be contrived without affront. If it were too abrupt it would suggest hostile feeling on Philip's part and appear to have some connection with the naval concentration in the Scheldt (to which Elizabeth had already knowingly referred, though how she could have found out was utterly beyond him). Feria finally contrived the plan, which was

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adopted, of having himself included amongst the hostages to be exchanged between the three powers on the signature of the treaty, to be secretly bought back later from France in return for one of Spain's French hostages.

When this had been arranged Philip wrote to Elizabeth explaining that he was compelled, much against his will, to recall the Count and commanding Bishop de Quadra to her good graces. Elizabeth, who had followed each step of these manœuvres from the beginning, answered politely that she quite understood the reasons for Feria's going and would be very sorry to lose him. The ambassador was then free to leave for Brussels, where, neatly filed, reposed the letters in which Elizabeth had for months been denouncing him as an arrogant and impossible fellow whom her brother of Spain would recall immediately if he had any regard for her wishes.

Before his departure Feria had a long audience with the Queen. This last talk, like their first one, was principally about religion. Feria again warned her that she would be ruined in this world and damned in the next unless she set herself firmly against the religious changes which were taking place. She answered

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“that she desired to establish in her kingdom the Augustine confession and faith, or another, but [of] similar form,” and tried to convince him, and through him Philip, that “she in fact differed little from those of the Catholic faith, because she believed that Christ was present in the sacrifice of the Eucharist and that in the Mass she disapproved of only two or three parts.” Though Feria was unable to appreciate it, she was expounding the fundamental tenets of that highly useful compromise, the Anglican Creed. When the ambassador ventured to expositulate with her, on the ground that the Pope was the final authority in matters of doctrine, she airily replied, “that for herself she thought to be saved quite as much as the Bishop of Rome.”

The conversation drifted into other channels. Feria tried to discover whom she was thinking of marrying at the moment, but without success. As usual she was not thinking of marrying at all, or she might take one of a dozen people. This subject was therefore soon exhausted, and Feria went on to talk about Philip’s greatness and the value of his friendship, which, he was pained to see, were much undervalued in England. Elizabeth cordially agreed,

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and volunteered to protect the King's reputation with her people by punishing the authors of scurrilous plays about him. Feria, irritated by her apparent incapacity to separate the important from the trivial, impatiently waved this aside as of no importance, telling her that Philip's soul was far above such trifles.

So he left her for the last time and returned to his master's side. The King thereafter looked on him as his Expert-in-Chief on English affairs, and in recognition of his services ultimately made him a duke. Even after Philip departed for Spain Feria remained in Brussels to advise the Duchess of Parma, the illegitimate half-sister whom Philip left in his place as Regent, and to write letters of warning to his successor, de Quadra, in which he labelled Elizabeth with such epithets as "Medea," "Jezebel," "this baggage," "she-devil" and many others derived from Biblical, classical and vulgar sources. He never forgave her for withholding permission for his wife to join him until a long time afterwards, though his wish that his son be born in Flanders was in fact realised.

He carried back to Brussels the same opinion with which he had left it: that Philip's

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security and the service of God demanded the conquest of England. The King listened and was half convinced. He looked at his growing navy in the Scheldt and could not make up his mind whether to use it to carry his invading forces to England or himself home to Spain. But homesickness prevailed over ambition, and Feria was seventeen years in his grave before his master adopted his advice. To the day of his death he never wavered in the belief, expressed to Philip in one of his last letters as ambassador, that the King, by his failure to invade England in the first place and to marry Elizabeth in the second, had "lost a Kingdom body and soul" and thrown away his one great chance to create a world empire for Spain.

The final draft of the treaty was brought to London for signature in May by a group of Henry's most blue-blooded courtiers. Elizabeth entertained them with a magnificence that none of them forgot to their dying day. Every moment was filled : deer hunts in Windsor forest, gaily lit pageants on the Thames in the evenings, great balls and banquets at Whitehall that lasted till the early morning. But their highest enthusiasm was reserved for

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the Queen herself. In their colourful and detailed accounts her animated figure emerges over and over again—now talking French loudly with evident pride in her accomplishment, now boasting confidently of the love of her people, now giving a stag the *coup de grâce* with her own hands, now riding through the streets of London in her gold coach, her red hair and pale skin strangely beautiful against the majestic purple of her robe.

In all the important capitals of Europe there were similar celebrations. The various delegates had gold chains and orders hung round their necks and collected enough presents to keep their descendants in dinner services for generations to come. Feria's friend, Lord William Howard, was indebted to the King of France for "a very large and honourable present of very fair and stately plate of gilt, amounting to 4,140 ozs. and worth £2,066, 13s. 4d." Everywhere people were rejoicing over the new era of lasting peace now to come.

In the meantime, behind closed doors, statesmen, generals and admirals were busily preparing for the next war. Elizabeth and Cecil looked across the North Sea at Philip's gathering flotilla and hurried to bring their own navy

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up to wartime standards. To the Spaniards they explained that they were arming against the threats of France, to the French that these preparations were an answer to Philip's forces now concentrating in the Netherlands. Engineers were sent north to strengthen the border fortresses, and secret agents into Scotland to stir up the Knoxian party against the French Regent, Mary of Lorraine, Mary Stuart's mother.

The French shipyards were equally active. Henry was only waiting for his daughter's marriage to Philip, whom he "hoped to put to sleep with matrimony," as a waggish diplomat put it, before launching the invasion which should sweep Elizabeth off her throne.

Philip himself, not yet so deeply asleep as to be unaware of Henry's activities, was countering that prince's schemes in Rome, while the Duke of Alba in Antwerp studied the East Anglian harbours and reckoned up his resources in infantry and transport. Feria's successor, Bishop de Quadra, in the belief that Spain would be the first invader, was secretly instigating the Irish to throw off the English yoke and attach themselves to their natural protector, the Catholic King. Scarcely had

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the three rulers solemnly bound themselves to eternal amity by the treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis before three wars broke out informally in Scotland, the Netherlands, and Ireland.

The marriage of Philip and Elizabeth of Valois took place on June 22nd, 1559. The bridegroom, unable to be present in person, sent a proxy to represent him; his thoughts on his wedding day were less with his bride than with his sister-in-law in London and his scented garden in Madrid. The only one who entered wholeheartedly into the spirit of the occasion was the bride's father. Henry saw the world stretched out fair before him. On this day he acquired as son-in-law the ruler of one great kingdom; it was now only a matter of months before his daughter-in-law should be ruler of another. The occasion demanded a suitable celebration, and he spared no expense to achieve it.

The festivities continued with mounting splendour for eight days until June 30th. The last and crowning event was a tournament in which the flower of French knighthood, including the King himself, took part. Before the day was over Henry lay mortally

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wounded from the chance thrust of a spear
in his eye.

With his death the alliance between Spain and France dissolved of its own accord. The first serious menace to Elizabeth's safety thus disappeared, but only to give place within a few days to another and far greater one. For on July 10th, 1559, Mary Stuart was crowned Queen of France, and the struggle began which was never to end until one royal cousin signed the other's death warrant twenty-eight years later.

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of research, he believes that nothing in the volume is drawn from any materials save strictly contemporary documents, letters, memoranda, Privy Council minutes, etc.

The great difficulty, as those familiar with historical documents have often observed, is the determination of the sequence of events. This is particularly true in a concentrated work covering so short a period of time—barely six months. The irregularity of the courier service and other factors naturally led correspondents to indite long reports at certain intervals, instead of transmitting each incident as it arose. Consequently we find a mass of information thrown into lengthy despatches with no internal proof to assist in unravelling the exact time order. Usually this can be established by external evidence; sometimes the student is compelled to fall back on his sense of logic abetted by his imagination. In the present book this difficulty was especially marked: the principal authority, the Spanish ambassador, was so tremendously occupied that he frequently forgot to record an important event in the despatch next following its occurrence, and only reported it later when some subsequent related event brought it back to his mind. Nevertheless

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less the material for these early months of Elizabeth's reign is comparatively so copious and so unbroken that in general mistakes may fairly be blamed on the author rather than on his sources.

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